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# The Evolution of Revolution

By

H. M. HYNDMAN

WITHDRAWN

We consider this work as practically a history of economic, social and political change from the immense antiquity of Communism to the present day, the most important contribution that has been made to the literature of this subject in the last fifty years. It is the magnus opus of the distinguished English publicist's long and useful life. It is a tremendously comprehensive work in eight sections with an introduction which Mr. Hyndman calls an abstract survey of revolution and in which he emphatically points out that "A revolution is none the less revolutionary because its aims have been achieved peacefully. Nor does the bloodiest upheaval really anticipate or even hasten the inevitable growth of events." The chapters on the present Russian experiment are of unusual interest coming as they do from a life-long Socialist "of the Right."

From the standpoint of clear, easy and sure literary style, Mr. Hyndman has few equals in his field. We predict that this, his greatest work, will be in the next five years the most widely read and used book on social problems; not only by professors, librarians and students, but by all people who have gotten beyond the bible and Shakespeare.

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# THE EVOLUTION OF REVOLUTION

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COMMERCIAL CRISES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE BANKRUPTCY OF INDIA

THE RECORD OF AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE

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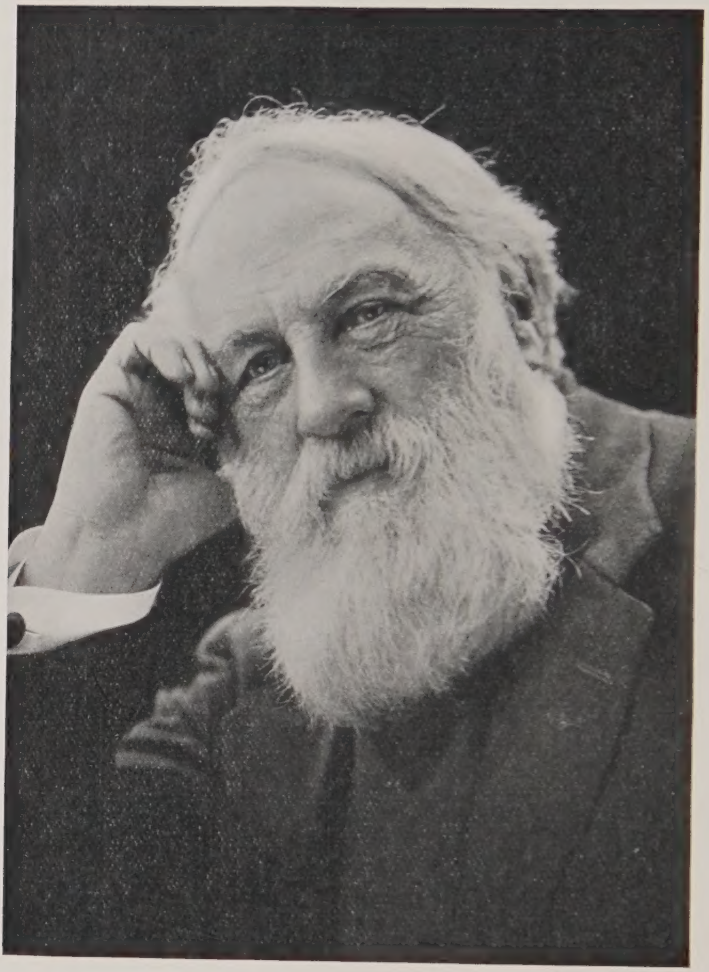

Yours sincerely

H. M. Hyndman.

# THE EVOLUTION OF REVOLUTION

BY

H. M. HYNDMAN

AUGSBURG COLLEGE MINNEAPOLIS

BONI AND LIVERIGHT
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TO

MY COMRADES OF THE

OLD SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

THE PIONEERS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

IN GREAT BRITAIN

1880–1911

99576

# PREFACE

My object in writing this book is to give a sketch of economic influences upon the growth of human society. At a time when revolutionary movements are going on all over the civilised world we may learn, to some extent, from the past what to avoid in the present and the future.

My obligations to the works of Lewis H. Morgan and Karl Marx are manifest, though I have ventured to differ, occasionally, from those great writers. In dealing with the downfall of slavery I have drawn upon the admirable Italian school of historic economy headed by Ciccotti and Salvioli.

I am conscious of many shortcomings in my attempt to survey briefly the early institutions and subsequent development of mankind. But I hope it may induce younger men than myself to work out a more complete study of this great subject.

The title was suggested to me by my friend, Mr Curtis Brown.

H. M. H.

13 Well Walk, Hampstead.
*September* 1920.

*Erratum*

Mr. Hyndman wishes to correct the statement in which he reports Cicero as having strangled Catiline. It was Catiline's associates and friends who were so strangled. Catiline died in battle.

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# INTRODUCTION

Careful observers agree that with the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the civilised world entered upon another revolutionary period. In this, as in other epochs of great social change, there is nothing really sudden about the development. Unnoted modifications in the economic order of things have been going on steadily all the time. But now these have become cumulative in their effect. The time is nearly ripe, therefore, for giving a political outlet and legal sanction to alterations in the industrial and social world—alterations which otherwise may compel men to accomplish ignorantly and in haste what ought to have been carried out intelligently and at leisure.

A revolution is none the less a revolution because its aims have been achieved peacefully; nor does the bloodiest upheaval really anticipate or even greatly hasten the growth of events. In the latter case, incapacity above and justifiable impatience below seethe until an outburst takes place. But then the queer psychology of human nature has its word to say in the matter; and though the crucial and necessary reforms are made, the people concerned, being mentally unprepared, allow a counter-stroke of reaction to take place which hinders them from realising the full value of the new forms then indispensable to social progress. Yet all that the ablest and most far-seeing men can do is to take account, without prejudice, of the facts around them and to make ready, in concert with their fellows, whose minds have been likewise awakened, for the actual transformation.

There are thus two sides to every great change in the conduct of human affairs. First, and most important in all progressive societies, is *the economic development* itself, which, up to the present era, has been for the most part unconscious, so far as the mass of the people, and even the most capable brains of the time, were concerned. Next to the growth of the economic forms comes the mental appreciation of them, which enables

the community, led by its clearest thinkers, to comprehend what is taking place. They may thus capably and consciously guide their own community on to the next plane of social realisation, as gardeners may help on the growth of a plant, though they could not alone cause it to grow. Such psychologic influence, reacting consciously upon national growth, is practically unattainable until mankind has reached the point in civilisation whence it can survey the unconscious gropings of the past, and the more intelligent aspirations of the present, as one great inevitable series of advances in the course of human progress. The unconscious is thenceforward controlled, or at least intelligently supervised, by the conscious.

Revolution, in its complete sense, means a thorough *economic*, *social* and *political* change in any great human community.

There can be no revolution, in this sense, until the economic and social conditions are ripe for such a change.

Therefore to speak of "making" a revolution is absurd. No man and no body of men can make a revolution; just as no man and no body of men can check a revolution, for any considerable time, when once the conditions of change are themselves prepared. This means, further, that the use of force, however justifiable, does not originate, and may not even hasten, revolution. Economic and social changes are not brought about in that way. Force may have *helped* revolution at exceptional periods; it has never *created* revolution at any period.

Yet, unless forms of government or means of expressing popular opinion have been so modified and adapted as to give a pacific and legal outlet to the general changes demanded by the economic and social situation, then forcible endeavours to establish the new system are inevitable. Nor can the most relentless application of force on the other side do more than postpone the advance. The part taken by force in revolution is, therefore, much less decisive than is commonly assumed.

It is a remarkable fact, for example, that the most crucial revolution in the story of human growth produced, in the earlier stages at any rate, no forcible revolt against the complete alteration that was being unconsciously made. This revolution was the transformation from collective or communal property held by a portion of a tribe, or gens, by the tribe

itself, and ultimately by a confederation of tribes, into private property held by the individual and his family. This enormous revolution, accompanied by an inevitable, and at least equally extraordinary, modification of the sexual relations, went on quite unconsciously among our primitive ancestors, without any of the bloodshed and upset which we are accustomed to associate, in the historical period, with far less serious social and economic modifications of an existing state of things. We can observe similar changes going on slowly at present, through contact with European ideas and methods, among existing tribes at the same stage of savage or barbaric development. Yet unless the application of these new views is accompanied by manifest injustice and cruelty, they are quietly accepted by the native tribes, who, reluctant as they may be, accommodate themselves by degrees to the foreign forms, introduced in the first instance by exchange, and become accustomed to this overturn of all their original conceptions and habits of life.

The direst poverty, the grossest injustice, the most revolting brutality do not, of themselves, engender revolution. They have very frequently occasioned widespread revolts of an alarming kind, accompanied by hideous atrocities, on the side of the oppressed as well as of the oppressors. But the social system of class servitude itself, however horrible it may be in many of its details, is not overthrown by such upheavals from below so long as it is adapted to the general economic needs of the period. Fear of the recurrence of disorders may produce a change for the better, but these improvements are superficial and do not affect the main social structure. A reign of terror, or an orgy of atrocity, by a dominated majority, allows the former sufferers to avenge past wrongs; it does not produce those conditions which will prevent the commission of similar wrongs in the future—unless unseen circumstances working below have already had this effect.

These considerations apply to societies which are not exposed to invasion, or to continuous pressure from without. When one community of greater power, whether civilised or barbarous, attacks, or even impinges upon another, revolution, or reaction in a revolutionary form, may easily follow, irrespective of the internal conditions of the country which has such a power for its neighbour. Here the influence of one human group may

arrest or accelerate the development of another, so far as to divert its natural progress into a totally different channel from that which it would have followed had there been no interference from without.

This applies not only to the course of material but of religious development. And in these cases force may, and does, have a great and sometimes a long-enduring effect. But such instances of the changes wrought by the contact of tribes, or nations, at different stages of social growth, are not usually regarded as revolutions, tremendous though their effects on the history of mankind have been. They are taken as a matter of course. So little was the current of economic evolution and its consequences understood, until recently, even by men of wide knowledge in other departments, that they have assumed that invasions and conquests by tribes only just emerging from barbarism, but possessed of fine physique and great fighting capacity, were in some instances advantageous to general progress. This idea has now been dispelled. Domination of a higher form of society by a lower has invariably spelt arrested development, or positive retrogression, for the conquered races, even where these the more civilised peoples had apparently reached a period of decay. The superior vigour and fighting power of the victors did not make amends for their inferior culture. Nor did the slack tide of development begin to flow again until the invaders had been absorbed or enlightened by the civilisation which they had apparently overwhelmed. This, we can now see, has been the invariable rule.

Nor does the overthrow of a people at a lower stage of development by one which has attained to a higher level produce a permanent revolution in the social sense. It is, indeed, doubtful whether any such conquests, revolutionary as they seemed at the time, have left an enduring mark on the subjugated races. The improvements introduced under such circumstances are merely superficial: after generations, perhaps centuries, passed under peaceful rule from without, the native population has taken up its tale of social history from, or near, the point at which it had arrived when conquered. In not a few instances the so-called inferior race has slowly absorbed the superior.

The greater the difference between the stages of civilisation

reached by the two races occupying the same territory the less influence has the one on the social development of the other. It is very doubtful whether conquest, except of like by like, has aided human progress as a whole. Even in that case the psychologic element steps in, apart from economic advantages or drawbacks, and incites the repressed people to demand the right of free expansion. Thus even national and social revolution from without is rarely, or never, permanent in its effect, except in cases where the higher civilisation, with its appliances, tools and culture, is voluntarily adopted by adjacent peoples, who themselves adjust the new methods to their own social forms. Where this is done, under the present conditions of improved intercourse and the rapidly augmented powers of man over nature, the increased rapidity of the social development amounts to a revolution of the most surprising character; stages of growth which, under the old conditions, had required centuries to traverse, being actually covered in decades.

Whether the economic and social advance is necessarily accompanied by an equal psychologic and intellectual change is not easy to determine. As a rule, and in spite of all theorising, it takes a very long time for material changes to transform the modes of thought transmitted from generation to generation, and to shake the religious observances which accompany diversified beliefs in the supernatural. The strange phenomenon may even be observed of a people consciously and capably availing themselves of the most recent discoveries of science and their most modern applications to the work of everyday life, yet remaining wholly immersed in their old-world superstitions, devoted to the most incredible deifications of real or imaginary objects, or to the age-old ancestor worship of their forbears.

There are those who contend that social revolutions are exclusively due to material causes, and that the tremendous effects which, at various periods, they have unquestionably produced upon the world can be traced, in every instance, to the underlying economic forms of the time when they arose. This school reduces all human action to direct or secondary material causes, putting aside instinct and psychology as unworthy of recognition. But it will be found on examination that this simple monism, so attractive to some minds, will not bear the

test of analysis. Time after time in the record of human growth we are brought face to face with vast movements which cannot by any possibility be explained by the influence of purely economic causes in the present or the past. As a result of such investigation we are forced to the conclusion that although man in society is unquestionably the outcome of material circumstances, nevertheless there are two currents, not merely one, to be observed at work throughout this social development. Of these the economic, as already said, is much the more important and the more continuous. But there is also the psychologic current accompanying the course of society as a whole, which, generally much less powerful, at intervals gains the mastery and carries all before it for the time being, while the economic element continues, but takes a subordinate place.

Even in social revolution, the only really permanent revolution, this becomes apparent when men exalt their ideals into a psychologic fetish. That is to say, when there is no immediate or proximate material cause which will satisfactorily account for the phenomena observed. Yet it is questionable whether, throughout the world's history, revolutions or revolts due to economic causes, and admitted to be so, have ever stirred men on the one hand to the performance of greater acts of heroism and self-sacrifice, or on the other to the perpetration of more frightful massacres and atrocities than the religious creeds and religious movements which cannot be traced to the desire of collective material advantage, or the hope of personal gain. In fact, so great a need do human beings appear to have of a psychologic, over and above a material or social motive, that at periods of violent effort their objects, however material in reality, are clothed with some idealistic glamour in the shape of abstractions divorced almost wholly from reality.

In the time just before a long-prepared social revolution, meeting with resistance, breaks out into violence, it is possible to foresee the line it will take and the changes to which it will give a political, and eventually a legal outlet.

Although religious upheavals and revolutions cannot be overlooked in any survey of the history of humanity, they constitute a relatively unimportant portion of the record of social antagonisms, when compared with the class struggles or class wars which have gone on since the dawn of civilisation. These

may be observed in every community, from the time when the institution of private property, in land as well as in personal objects, the spread of slavery, the accumulation of riches in a few hands, with the disintegrating influence of money and exchange, created antagonistic classes, arising out of strongly divergent economic and social interests. For long periods these dissensions were kept down in many regions, where, for some untraced reason, the same forms of production and distribution, with their attendant slavery, remained unchanged under an enlightened or a theocratic despotism, where a system of caste has been stereotyped for generations, or where barbarian conquerors have long crushed out the growth and initiative of a superior culture. Examples of this arrested development, when a certain stage of civilisation has been reached, are numerous, especially in Asia; but, sooner or later, either from internal causes or from outside interference, the class struggle is renewed, and, in the old shape or the new, gives rise to peaceful or forcible revolution.

In free communities, and in Western Europe generally, this class conflict has, however, been continuous. It has pervaded every society in succession from the break-up of the gentile and communal order. During the whole of the slave period and the social forms that arose from its decay, the class war between the diverse sections, from the patricians down to the chattel slaves themselves, from the feudal nobles and their higher retainers down to the serfs, from the landowners and capitalists down to the wage-earners, has continued to our own day. Gradually simplifying itself, as the intermediate social orders have forced from the dominant class of their day recognition and full rights for their section, this latent but persistent antagonism has now resolved itself into one final struggle. This steady friction of economic and social conflict, whose existence has always been denied by the classes in control, going on often under the appearance of social balance and organised harmony, has given rise to interminable trials of strength between groups and individuals and has been the motive power of social progress. This truth is no longer contested. The class antagonisms which took the shape of personal relations and personal differences have slowly faded into pecuniary relations and pecuniary differences. These are now

supreme; so much so that the fetishism of money pervades the whole of civilised life: the creation and distribution of wealth are regarded almost entirely through this distorting medium. The many-coloured faction fights of the past have been transformed into the grim and sordid cash antagonisms of the present. But the greatest revolution of all time has begun. The age-long differentiation of the old communal forms by private property is being reintegrated and unified under our eyes: we are arriving at the co-operative and communal forms of the old gentile period on an almost infinitely higher plane.

# CHAPTER I

## PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM

All authorities are agreed that, throughout the earlier development of mankind, communism, without any private property whatever in the means of creating wealth, prevailed as the economic and social order. This can be traced from the nomadic hordes and "classes" of the Australian aborigines, the rude "bushmen" of Africa, the semi-animal tribes of Patagonia, through all the improving forms of savage life and barbarism, up to the first glimmerings of civilisation. Very small and inefficient as were the tools and instruments and methods at the disposal of these simple tribes for the creation of wealth, they were handled by each and all for the common good. Private ownership, in any shape which gave its possessor economic or social power over his fellows, was unknown. Food and other needs for human life were shared among the members of the tribe according to the wants of the individuals of the small community.

Nature necessarily appeared to our remote ancestors, types of whom still survive for our inspection, and too often as playthings for our cruelty, wholly unintelligible and quite incapable of control by themselves. Yet they were able to obtain and use, under primitive, and of course still more under later, communism, natural products for the common advantage both from land and from water. Social production, or, in the earlier days, the procuring of what was wanted for the use of the tribe, and communal distribution among the tribal men, women and children of the group were the rule. Should scarcity result from difficulty in finding provender, or from any social mischance or natural upset, and one member consequently suffered, then all other members were similarly undergoing privation. If, on the other hand, there was plenty, each and all had their share to the full extent of their needs.

It was not an ideal society, that of our most ancient forbears,

assuredly. Cannibalism, for example, revolting as it is to us, was nevertheless an advance upon the haphazard mode of existence that preceded. Flesh was needed and man ate man. The great invention or discovery of fire, and therefore of cookery, accompanied or anticipated the man-eating period, and the desire to obtain human food for the tribal larder became one of the causes of war between contiguous tribes. But the supplies of food thus obtained, like the rest, whether killed and eaten at once, or kept alive as a reserve of meat to be used when required, were equally *common stores* devoured by the members of the tribe at great feasts. The horror of anthropophagy in nowise changed the communal character of the general consumption; nor, at that stage, does humanity see anything other than what is natural in applying to men the same rules of dismemberment and absorption which we now exercise in regard to oxen, sheep, or pigs, which were not then available.

Members of another horde or tribe were considered fair game. It was wholly moral to divide up and eat the bodies of dead or living enemies. This lust after flesh, gratified in such a manner, was, in fact, part of the social arrangement, and it naturally prejudices us against the whole period when our forbears regarded one another, if born into a hostile tribe, as specially created for the subsistence of the conquerors in battle. So does the custom of burying alive the aged, still practised in some regions, and the destruction of female children, which likewise obtains even among peoples who have arrived at a stage much nearer to civilisation.

As society progressed, first sea and river fishery, and later, in the course of countless centuries, cultivation of the soil for cereals, gave increasing sources of supply. Thus men's means of subsistence gradually became less uncertain, and the habitations of the human race spread all over the globe. But everywhere, as is now clearly established, the same or similar forms of communal life prevailed, modified only by climate and the natural surroundings to which the little groups had to adapt themselves. All the great combinations of mankind, therefore, of which we ourselves form part, and others which we see around us to-day, grew up out of these tribal institutions that had everything in common. Their unconscious and infinitely slow progress made way through the ages on every continent.

There is nothing to show us that any portion of the human race failed to pass through this communal stage. On the contrary, all the evidence attainable proves that there was no exception to this rule.

A more conservative system of social life than communism can scarcely be imagined. It calls for a strong effort of the imagination to conceive how even the earlier communism of the horde developed into the later and better supplied communism of the gens, tribe and combination of tribes. But how, when once established, this later communism could have been broken up at all is still more difficult to understand. Almost every instinct and reason which could influence human beings appeared to favour the permanence of the existing social state, when once a certain level of assured well-being had been reached. The necessary work of the whole body, when the merely nomadic period had passed, was performed by the men and women within the group as arranged by custom based upon mutual agreement, and all shared in the joint produce obtained by the associated labour of the whole of the members of the group.

In the lower forms of such a communism, before fisheries, agriculture and small handicraft had come within the scope of tribal work, life was hard and sustenance precarious for both sexes. Since also the women performed the whole, or nearly the whole, of the home duties, alike among the roving tribes of hunters for subsistence and the more settled savages with a local, if temporary, habitat, they are assumed to have done far more than their share of the communal toil and to have been, throughout the earlier periods, little better than ill-used slaves to the men. But if we consider the relative share of the common hardships and the exceptional risks and long days of semi-starvation undertaken by the males of the tribe, especially in the time of shifting habitation and dependence upon the provision of food by the chase, we shall see that no real inequality of sacrifice nor undue and cruel burdens were imposed upon the women.

The communal form of production and distribution, where each and all contributed of their joint toil for the general good, and consumed, in accordance with what they needed, from this common stock, appears, therefore, to have been an inevitable

stage of human society which no race of mankind could avoid.

Among such splendid physical specimens of humanity as the North American Indians, the Maoris of New Zealand, many of the island tribes of Polynesia, the Zulus and Masai of Africa, the early Scandinavians and Germans, the Greek and Roman gentes, the powerful Turanian and Semitic tribes of Asia, as well as among the physically inferior peoples still to be found in the interiors of great continents and great islands, communal life was the only life which they could understand and carry on. It was the same among peoples such as the Peruvians, the village Indians and the Chinese, as among the most warlike, the Aztecs, the Semites and the Turcoman hordes.

Under these conditions of natural production for the social and personal use of each and all, and equitable sharing of the results of the general toil, there were no economic or social antagonisms whatever within the groups themselves. The interest of each individual merged itself, unconsciously but harmoniously, in the interest of the whole gens or tribe, and the general interest accepted by immemorial custom and tribal hereditary instinct. As the interest of the entire group was likewise the personal object of every individual of the group, it was impossible to separate the one from the other. The whole society hung together, and every expression of its existence and attitude, towards itself and external objects, was collective and social, not individual and anarchical. The children of the several parents were the children of the tribe, and were regarded as its most important possession. Indifference to the general well-being of the youth of a gens or tribe was inconceivable, even among groups which practised female infanticide shortly after birth. Death was a trifling matter; deterioration was treachery to the tribe. Such wholesale neglect and degradation of child life as is common in great civilised cities could not be possible in a savage community: the reason for this appalling contrast being that in the one case human solidarity is a material ethical religion affecting and controlling all the members of the small but closely knit society; in the other case there is no such feeling of joint and several responsibility for all and especially for children. Hence ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-nurtured infants are left to the chance care of

poverty-stricken mothers, or the still more precarious tutelage of a degrading charity.

Ordered communism among savages: anarchical individualism among civilised peoples. That is the rule.

Thus each group or combination of gentes in the tribe, or later in the federation of tribes, sufficed for itself, and acted as a common brotherhood, whose social, sexual and economic arrangements for the communal existence were all on one plane. The powers of production were necessarily very small, to our notions. But these powers were under the complete control of those who jointly owned and applied them. There was, and there could be, no antagonism between man and machinery, or between one class and another class, for classes in our sense did not exist during the real communal period. Within the gens and tribe peace and good-will permanently reigned so long as communal equality prevailed; though when the chief, or war lord, developed into the irresponsible autocrat, and priests obtained influence, horrible excesses were committed within the tribes themselves, even while communism in distribution still existed, and before any accumulation of wealth in private hands had become possible. Comparatively trifling as were the means of creating and obtaining articles of necessity, they were sufficient at quite an early stage of development, when all helped and none idled, to provide a reasonable standard of comfort for the whole group, according to their ideas of well-being. Further, they learned by experience to make ready to some extent for periods of scarcity by isolating known sources of supply under tribal and religious ban against immediate use, or by hoarding such food as would keep in climates where this preservation was possible.

Yet these same groups, so peaceful within themselves, were generally bitterly hostile to all other contiguous groups, even where there was no actual dispute about territory nor any apparent pressure of need to obtain captives for eating. Such warfare, indeed, is still carried on where there would seem to be no present motive for conflict, and may therefore be taken as a survival from times when the causes for intertribal hostilities were manifold, just as cannibalism was practised as a religious rite long after the consumption of human flesh ceased to be a common usage.

Those communal tribes have survived to our own day; they

still exist in greater or less completeness, and have largely contributed, owing to the careful and minute investigations of modern anthropologists and sociologists, to our knowledge of the life, habits, customs and sexual relations of our own ancestral progenitors of the long past. The time has gone by when these fading representatives of the great and universal and age-old communal epoch were regarded either as the relics of the golden age of mankind, or were pointed to as fallen descendants of the primitive couple from Paradise. They are now recognised as, so to say, the living fossils of successive strata in the long annals of human evolution. From them we can learn by actual experience how high human beings in the communist stage of growth had risen above any other mammal, and how marvellous—in spite of all drawbacks—are the services which their own forbears of prehistoric periods rendered to the coming generations of our race.

Every one of the bed-rock inventions and discoveries of mankind, without which further progress would have been impossible, was made during this communal period. As we examine and reflect upon each advance in succession, and consider what initiative, what patience, what originality, what collective individual genius were required to begin and develop man's early strivings to control, in some degree, that vast and incomprehensible sphere of nature whose several actions seemed to him to be under the direct management of good and evil spirits—we can but feel unmeasured astonishment that rude, untutored savages should have achieved so much under such circumstances, even given an infinity of time in which to accomplish their progress. For the length of the period offers no explanation of the beginning of each revolutionary change in the method of production, nor of the results obtained when the change was made.

The material achievements of these primitive communists far transcend all that the genius of civilisation has since produced. Let us remember what difficulties they had to overcome; there were no precedents to guide, no triumphs to encourage, no proven fruitful methods to employ. In each and every case, from the earliest attempt to the last victory over the resistance of nature, doubt hung around the whole venture, handed on, we know not how, to an innumerable succession of

generations. How long did it take naked nomads, with their chance protection of leaves and boughs, to invent the boomerang, to realise the use of sun-dried clay for the erection of dwellings in one region, or bark for tents in another, or wigwams with poles and skins or woven mats in a third? The invention and use of flint implements, with the amazing skill displayed in their handling for industrial purposes, were quite as noteworthy examples of the development of man, the tool-manipulating animal, as any automatic lathe of the twentieth century motived by steam or electricity. Think of the discovery of fire and its application to the social service of our race. Whether accidental or owing to some inconceivable hint of undetected possibility, what apparently endless toil for a problematical result our remote ancestors undertook when they rubbed dry sticks together to the point of kindling and then preserved the flame thus engendered with unremitting care! Tradition handed on the memory of this difficult beginning and renewal in the fires kept burning, under conditions whose sanctity we can scarcely comprehend, through the ages in the households, even when far easier methods had long displaced the rude endeavour of the more ancient tribesmen.

But the progress of agriculture is more remarkable still. Notwithstanding very ingenious conjectures, we are still quite at a loss to explain the earlier stages of tillage and expectant cultivation. We laugh as we read of how some South American Indians ate the seed given them by Jesuit missionaries to plant. But why should not they? They were still living in the accidental stage of human existence. The grain was an immediate boon to them. How many, many generations, what a vast array of centuries, lay between the uncalculating savage who laid hands upon what was eatable, no matter how he came by it, and devoured it forthwith, and the forethought of the communistic barbarian who had learnt to bury the seed in the confident assurance that months thereafter he should derive immense benefit from his self-restraint, prudence and scientific preparation of the soil with digging sticks. The immediate consumers of the seed, and the planters of the seed, content to await the operations of nature for a crop, seem to belong to different breeds of animals. Their forms of production were entirely different. Yet socially they were alike. Both were

communists. If we were able to trace accurately this growth of human social power from fruit and nut gathering, tree-worm seeking, animal killing by boomerang—early Egyptians used the boomerang—to tillage and irrigation of the soil, we should go far to solve so much as can be solved of the problem of human progress. Yams, potatoes, maize, wheat, oats, taro, all the results of intelligent cultivation, put mankind on a communistic plane where sudden shortage of food became rare. However brutal the customs of the tribe might be, in some respects, the necessaries of life were, in the main, safe.

So it was throughout. The invention of that wonderful contrivance, the bow and arrow, for hunting and war; the net, the spear and the flare for fishing; the weaving of cloth from bark and fibres; the making and the baking of pottery from clay; the domestication of wild animals; the use of the stencil-plate for adorning bark fabrics and woven fibres; the smelting of metals; the discovery and development of the wheel—each and all of these inventions, and many others which seem so simple and easy to us to-day, were indispensable steps to man's command over nature, and are tributes to that impulse and spirit of progress under communism, coming we know not whence, which was the basis of the great works of industry and art we now see around us. Harmonised collective intelligence, devoted to the advance of the general well-being, laid the foundations of the whole of modern industrial society.

On river and sea the same. The boat, the paddle, the oar, the sail, the rudder, the outrigger, the small and great canoes, all had their origin under communism. Each in turn is a masterpiece of human ingenuity. The sail alone is a wonderful example of human inventiveness, used by our ancestors for locomotion by water ages ago. How long it may have taken to discover and apply the sail is of course unknown: what matters is that success was attained under the institution of gentile common ownership. It is so easy to underrate these early achievements. Yet even to-day, in this era of precocity, with all the winds and waves of heredity and social instinct wafting us along, it would take a very clever lad, inheriting all these aptitudes, the growth of hundreds of thousands of years, to tell at once why his sailing boat, crossing with the wind blowing abeam, should go forward towards the other side of the

pond instead of drifting helplessly to leeward, as, without a sail, it certainly would. Many a civilised man also who uses the tiller automatically would be puzzled to explain why the pressure of the water on a flat piece of wood immersed at the stern of his boat can turn the vessel in motion this way or that even if he has produced the same effect before by the use of a paddle or an oar in a canoe. Yet savages and barbarians had acquired the knowledge and application of both these important improvements while still in the communistic state. Sailing and steering had few secrets for them. All this done at sea is really more remarkable than the progress in the production of food, the planting and improvement of trees, or even the irrigation works carried on by the same tribes on land.

To the civilised mind, moreover, absorbing, through custom, education and persistent usage, the idea that nothing can be done by intelligent adults in the way of invention except for individual advantage and private gain, it is still harder to realise that all the essential steps towards higher knowledge and culture were taken by unknown persons who never thought they had any right to private gain from the realisation and application of their ideas. No more did the tribe as a whole imagine that any personal ownership could exist in regard to the land which they jointly cultivated. From the nomad roaming over forest and plain in search of nuts, fruits, tree slugs or easily captured game, to the well-behaved and polite savage or barbarian on the highroad to civilisation, common work, common property, common use of inventions, common distribution of products, natural or cultivated, was the custom; economic equality the invariable rule.

## CHAPTER II

## EQUALITY WITHIN THE GENS

Among the tribes which still carry on this natural communism, even in those where the caste of chiefs has been instituted, and tribal slavery has been introduced, the stage of collective industry, division of labour and organisation of considerable works by skilled labourers, to whom the very idea of payment for services is unknown, gives a totally different conception of what such savagery and barbarism means from that which is commonly taught. Thus we assume that a cannibal is necessarily a bestial savage of disgusting type. Not at all. A cannibal chief may be, and often is, a person of exceptional politeness, having a keen sense of the duties of communal hospitality, with no ulterior view to the cooking and consuming of his guest. The members of the tribe engaged at any ordinary meal will, as a matter of propriety to themselves, gracefully offer the friendly passer-by a share of their food. Those, too, who are accepted as friends and pass the night in a native village are spontaneously offered female attentions, as a matter of course, which it may be as inconvenient to accept as it would be considered insulting to decline. Certainly the communal savage or barbarian, naked, queerly decorated, anthropophagous and, in certain matters, brutal and superstitious as he may be, often possesses a standard of courtesy, as well as of personal dignity, which may compare favourably not only with the proletariat of civilised cities but even with the highly educated upper classes of our own country.

The details of the production and industry of such communal tribes are exceedingly interesting and afford remarkable evidence, as in the case of Indian artificers who have attained to a more advanced grade of social development, of what inherited skill and early apprenticeship may create. This may be traced among all tribes still existing in different parts of the world, as well as in the remains of those that have passed away. Thus

the elaborate system of irrigation carried out in mountainous regions with watered crops extending layer above layer up to a high level, the water being distributed to the successive plantations of wet crops such as taro, or dry cereals such as maize, shows a knowledge of this method of enhancing cultivation fully equal in its way to anything that modern engineers could compass. For these savages or barbarians, with nothing better to aid them than hollowed logs, will irrigate a whole series of hillsides, and thus make provision against any probable shortage of more easily acquired produce.

But their constructions are even more surprising than their agriculture. A great communal house which, with its complete roofing and decorations, may take a year or several years to construct is a work of art in every respect. The artisans and labourers who build it are entirely dependent in the lower stage of development upon flint tools for their work, and are of course destitute of the many mechanical contrivances which thousands of years of civilisation, growing out of their ingenuity, have provided for their successors. The great double canoe, which is a tribal possession, represents a still more remarkable triumph of craftsmanship. This fine vessel, with a deck-house and huge sail, is made out of planks sewn together with coco-nut fibre, but so carefully fitted and adjusted that the canoes make little water, even in a considerable sea-way, and with a large body of men on board. The deck also is so splendidly adzed with a flint adze that the best European plane handled by a highly skilled ship's carpenter cannot touch its perfectly level surface. Yet this astonishing specimen of results obtained by sheer human aptitude, used at every mechanical disadvantage, is constructed without the employment of any contractor, or any payment, as we understand it, to the artisans engaged for two entire years solely upon this single vessel, unless their labour should be required for some exceptional assistance in agriculture. During the whole of this time these skilled craftsmen are fed and, so far as necessary, clothed, by the produce from the land, and the fishing in the sea and river, like other members of the tribe. They would be unable to conceive, in their natural state, and before the arrival of white men, of any form of remuneration for this great skill other than that of sharing with their fellow tribes-people the produce of their common toil.

In the most complete form of this gentile economy where all are socially equal, though female infants are sometimes exposed, children are regarded as the children of the tribe and the idea that any of them should go short of food or necessary attention so long as the means of well-being are at disposal, and the tribe itself subsists, would not occur to any of them. Not all the cruelty and brutality and superstition spoken of destroys the fellowship and fraternity which permeates every function of their daily life. Nay, the very fetishism of semi-supernatural conceptions and the toleration of an idealised animalism are inseparably connected with the common existence of blood relations in their group. In war as in peace the ties of blood and of kindred bind each to all and all to each. To avenge a relation by blood, if wrong be done to any, is the sacred duty of the whole closely knit fraternity, who, tracing their descent through the female line, of necessity make common cause in the vendetta.

When war is waged against another tribe the same desperate unanimity of hatred renders the struggle one of mutual annihilation or absorption. Mere conquest or domination is neither desirable nor possible on either side. Captives, if not adopted, are tortured to death, or killed and eaten. Later only, as power of producing wealth increases, are they either absorbed into the victorious group or retained as tribal slaves. This is the first important step towards the break-up of the gentile social arrangements based on equality of condition for all. In general, the cruelty shown towards enemies contrasted with the good feeling encouraged and maintained within the limits of the tribe itself. (The exceptions to this rule prove nearly always to be the victims of religious ceremonies, sacrificed for what is supposed to be the good of the tribe.) Communism, while leading small numbers of people to live harmoniously with one another, did nothing to restrain the ferocity and ruthlessness of primitive peoples outside the circle of their own blood-relationship in the gens and tribe.

Morgan's discovery, based upon his life-long investigations into the scheme of blood relationships among savages and barbarians in all parts of the world, that the gens as it existed among the North American Indians was the unit of the early forms of ancient society, entirely revolutionised the conception

of human sexual relations and domestic arrangements at all the stages of development up to the beginning of civilisation. Certain widespread relationships which still existed could only be reconciled with a form of marriage that had almost, or entirely, disappeared. This led him to the assumption that these relationships, founded on a complicated system of consanguinity, must have arisen out of the group marriage, which, in its partial survival, has been mistaken by many travellers for mere promiscuity. That a group of brothers should have as wives in common a group of sisters is a type of sexual relationship difficult to comprehend by us of to-day, with centuries upon centuries of monogamy, accompanied by concubinage and various forms of prostitution, behind us. But the probability amounting almost to certainty of the existence of such a marriage connection can alone explain those relationships which, drawn from innumerable sources, Morgan first, and more recently others, have been at such great pains to investigate and tabulate.

It so happens that I myself first came across these elaborate and systematic researches into savage and barbarian sex relations just fifty years ago. Morgan had not at that time formulated the theory which a few years later destroyed the old conception of the permanent universality of the monogamous family, rendered him famous and greatly disturbed all who had not mastered his remarkable array of the facts. During my stay in Polynesia I chanced to meet the celebrated Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. Lorimer Fison, then in charge of a mission on the Rewa river, in the great island of Viti Levu. Fison in the course of conversation told me that the Smithsonian Institute of the United States, moved thereto " by a man named Morgan," had sent round a series of questions as to the scheme of relationships existing and acknowledged among the tribes throughout Polynesia. The same questions, he understood, had been submitted to the missionaries and others who took an interest in the matter all over the world.

Fison, for his part, comprehending the importance of the inquiry, went most carefully into the subject and had been surprised to find that the theory of relationships throughout the archipelago in which he served was nearly identical with that of the North American Indians with whom Morgan (himself a

blood brother and of adopted kinship of the Seneca gens of the Iroquois tribe) had commenced his general analysis. Though astonished and interested in what Fison showed me, as well as in his remarks upon descent reckoned through the mother, which everywhere prevailed, I failed at this time to appreciate the value of the work that was being done; nor did Mr Lorimer Fison then grasp fully the object or the tendency of Morgan's vast survey of human family relations, sexual arrangements and tabulation of relationships. Nevertheless after providing all available information for the Smithsonian Institute from Polynesia he followed this up, not long afterwards (having been transferred in the meantime to Australia), by a series of detailed observations and records concerning the still earlier tribal and sexual arrangements as displayed among the nomadic hordes in that vast island continent. These with their primitive "classes" and their almost unlimited right of sexual intercourse between the males of one "class" and the females of another "class," no matter how far split off by segmentation or divided by distance, went still further to confirm the thesis which the originator of the entire investigation had then begun to formulate at length.

Similar evidence poured in from every quarter, which it is not necessary for the present purpose to quote. Enough to say that Asia, Africa and Europe, as well as America, Australia, the great islands of the Indian Ocean and Malay Archipelago, the Sandwich Islands, New Zealand and other groups of the Pacific Ocean all, in the main, afforded proof of the contentions based upon the original discovery and the deductions therefrom. Here and there the conclusions have been pushed too far; but a series of facts were established which gave an almost complete summary of the sexual relations existing under communism from what may be called full promiscuity, or untrammelled intercourse between men and women of every age and relationship, through group marriage and the subsequent establishment of the gens itself, to a light and easily dissolved monogamous tie between men of various gentes and women of another gens.

Promiscuity, such as intercourse between brothers and sisters, or even parents and children, seems so shocking to modern observers that they readily put down these to the influence of the devil, or the uncontrolled subornations of original sin.

The absence of all disgust or horror in regard to such matters denotes, however, not criminality, but lack of experience and ignorance. As mankind slowly awakened to the drawbacks to their progeny of such "incestuous," though then perfectly moral, associations, our remote forbears made the restrictions upon these close consanguineous types of intercourse more and more stringent. The advantage of such limitation may be presumed to have become gradually apparent. Those tribes which, from any cause, abandoned the old system discovered that they had better children as their successors than those who adhered to the previous unchecked promiscuity.

Conscious or unconscious natural selection, for the purpose of generating the fittest of the race, slowly worked its way upwards and onwards. Sexual intercourse between persons of close consanguinity ceased by degrees to be customary and then even allowable. Marriage between first cousins in blood through the mother would be considered, under the conditions thus developed, quite as incestuous as we should consider marriage between brother and sister. Thence arose the establishment of the gens, in which the whole of the members, male and female, are bound together by close blood relationship through the mother. From this point the evolution of sex relations and gentile institutions may be traced, with comparative certitude and little variation, through all the gradations of savagery and lower barbarism, up to the higher barbarism prior to the beginnings of civilisation.

It is with the establishment and development of the gens, due to the steady limitation of the circle of permissible sexual intercourse, and the introduction of the pairing family, that the unit of barbarous social life, customs and organisation attains its highest point. Loose at first, as it was, this pairing family in nowise interfered with the communistic arrangement of the household that had previously existed. As before, the parentage of the children was derived from the certitude of birth from the mother, never from the still doubtful parentage of the father. Moreover, as marriage between members of the consanguineous gens was strictly forbidden, the wives were all, or nearly all, of the same gens, while the husbands were drawn from different gentes. Thus the control of the household and its general management, its cooking, decoration, small manufacture,

etc., remained in the hands of the women. In the best period of barbarism not only were men socially and economically equal, except in so far as they rendered voluntary deference and obedience to leaders in war, and controllers in peace, of their own choice, but women were accorded, or rather naturally possessed, the right to take part and vote in the gatherings of the tribe. Their services and influence were publicly acknowledged.

In some respects their position was even preferable to that of the men, seeing that the communal household was under their management, children were recognised as theirs far more than the husbands, the descent being reckoned through them, not through the father, and inheritance of such small, strictly personal property as might belong to the man and woman going, at death of either party, to the wife and her gens, with entire exclusion of the blood relations of the husband. Such being the advantages of the women, their status was relatively higher individually and collectively than it has ever been since.

The gentile system was at first, in its theory and generally in practice, as complete a democracy, on a small scale, as the world has seen. Essentially a league of blood relationship, with brotherhood, sisterhood and mutual respect for all: the children being the cherished belongings of the whole maternal gens: rights and duties, duties and rights being inextricably blended in one common tribal and gentile loyalty to the collective advantage of all in peace and in war: this combination of free and equal men and women had arrived at a state of mutual aid and mutual succour which might well have led to a permanent and beneficent association for all time. Even the elected war lords and peaceful administrators could be removed at the will of the gentile members. There were no police, no prostitutes, no property to create economic domination, no incitement to crimes of plunder, passion or jealousy within the gens, and no theft. Such drawbacks and difficulties as arose were dealt with by the gens and the tribe. Even murder was treated, not as a case for mere individual punishment, but as a matter of blood retribution, on account of the consanguinity of the person killed to all the rest of the gens and tribe. If anyone injured any member of the gens he injured all its members; and as the killing of a member was the greatest injury that could be inflicted upon this closely knit fraternity, a blood-feud was

started by the gens against the gens, or even by the tribe against the tribe of the offender, until the matter was settled, either by agreement between the gentes on one side or the other, or by the killing of the murderer by the members of the aggrieved gens—which of itself balanced the account.

Nevertheless the gens, with all its common property, community of living in the household, common relationship and consanguinity, common rights and duties, common friendships and common enmities in the gens, the combination of gentes in the phratry and the further combination of the phratries in the tribe, never constituted a family, or a grouping of families, in the civilised sense. At the period of the fullest development of the gentes this pairing marriage was never the unit of the society in any part of its forms and ramifications. The society was built up from and upon the gens and the gens alone. But the man and his mate, or rather the female mate and her man, could not belong to the same gens. Husband and wife, in the nearest approach to monogamy attained under the complete gentile system, belonged, of necessity, to different gentes. Half belonged to the gens of the male, half to the gens of the female. The latter, since the children were recognised as of the gens of the mother, and she was in nowise, economically, or socially, dependent upon or under the control of the man, was the stronger half of the two. Communism and gentilism meant, in fact, social equality and freedom for the woman in her marriage relations with her paired man, and a similar freedom and equality for the man in relation to the woman. The maintenance of the tie was regulated by custom and general opinion, not by law, nor even by traditional observance. The severance of the connection, for a sufficient reason, was not encouraged, but was easily brought about. The modern monogamous family based on male superiority and private property was an utterly different arrangement.

Here then was a system of society arising from the gens to wider combinations which, as it now appears, constituted, like communism in ownership and distribution, the foundation of all the aggregations of human beings over the entire globe that had passed out of the mere nomadic stage.

On the continent of America mankind had not developed into civilisation from the gentile relationships and communal

forms at the time of the discovery and conquest. In Europe and Asia civilisation has had the upper hand for many, many centuries. But in those continents, also, only the existence of the gens, in the shape thus analysed and expounded, can explain fully the relationships, settlements, tribal arrangements, democratic constitution, leadership in war, government and council in peace, together with the age-long permanence of the gentile bond and connection, even when its basis had changed and its common ownership had almost entirely disappeared.

## CHAPTER III

## THE DECAY OF THE GENTILE SYSTEM

So complete in itself, so fully adapted to meet the fraternal and gregarious instincts of humanity, was this gentile economic communism that we may well feel surprise that its manifest advantages, within its own limits, did not enable the institutions thus collectively created to evolve even higher powers of man over nature, such astounding discoveries and inventions being already made and used. As we survey this development in Greece, in Rome, in Germany, in Slavonia, in Mesopotamia and Eastern Asia, it would not appear to be beyond the capacity of such able races, Aryan, Semitic and Turanian, to carry this organisation onwards to the full fruition of their achievements, breaking down the tribal antagonisms by federations, with communism and gentilism still maintained. Having reached so high a level in comfort and general prosperity compared with their savage and lower barbarian forbears, it would seem feasible, or at least not more difficult than the course eventually followed, that mankind might have proceeded continuously on the same lines, and thus avoided the troubles and disasters to the race which resulted, in the course of ages, from what actually took place.

The change from the practically universal gentilism and communism that occurred at different periods in different parts of the world, and is not wholly completed yet, is the greatest social revolution known in human history. Its full purport and influence has not perhaps even now been fully appreciated, because the steps of this crucial transformation are exceedingly difficult to trace with accuracy and because the tribes who underwent the entire overthrow of their economic, sexual and social system were wholly ignorant of the causes or the consequences of what they themselves were unconsciously doing.

To a gentile tribesman private property in land, means of

creating wealth, food, large houses or canoes, was not only non-existent, but inconceivable. The domination of man over woman, the supremacy of the father in the monogamous family, and the regulation of all affairs on the foundation of locality and possession could no more have been anticipated by such a brother or sister of the gens than a slave or a serf could have foreseen the organisation of a capitalist trust. He would have declared, if such a possibility of the realisation of the unknown and the inconceivable could have been brought home to his mind, that a society of that kind would have been anarchical, immoral and disgusting to such a degree that life would not be worth living for the great majority of those who composed it—in which hypothetical judgment the gentile discrimination would not have been so very far wrong.

What renders the break-up of the gentile and communist forms, with their conservative yet progressive institutions extending over such vast periods, the more difficult of comprehension is that, in the higher stage of barbarism approaching to the confines of civilisation, considerable tribal wealth had already been accumulated. There was not only comfort but luxury, as they would deem it, in many of the tribes, before the stage of private property and the acceptance of male superiority was reached. The probability of "hard times," due to natural causes, such as tempest, drought, earthquake or floods, had been largely provided against by storage of food and the taboo of natural supplies. Thus economic security and well-being were ensured within, while thorough physical training and habitual use of arms by the gentile males gave a reasonable safeguard against attack from without. Nor were these people devoid of culture or destitute of art. When, therefore, all allowance is made for the hideous cruelty of the animal man towards his own species at all periods of his existence, there seemed no special reason for a crucial modification of those arrangements which were adequate for the needs of the people who lived happily under them at the time, with every prospect of improvement in coming generations.

There seems no doubt, however, that this very same increase of the common wealth, due to the greater power of man over nature, was directly and indirectly the cause of the overthrow of the most long-lived and the most harmonious social system

under which our race has ever existed. Gentile relations and common ownership of all important property sufficed for gentes, phratries, tribes, and even for "nations" or confederations of tribes. They could not be adequate for those wider, still less for those world-wide, connections of humanity which, for some inscrutable reason, became inevitable in the evolution of mankind all over the earth. Yet the first effect of the discovery that human beings could, by their socially organised labour, produce more than their keep, had, at least in one direction, a softening influence.

Cannibalism commonly existed where food, especially animal food, was scarce. When, however, the tribal warriors were better fed, and especially when they had arrived at the point where a moderate provision of meat or of cereals was available, cannibalism gradually lost its chief attraction. Human beings were then able to furnish by their labour all that was necessary for their nourishment and something more. That "something more" was the direct economic inducement to clemency. To torture and kill, to feed and eat enemies was then discovered to be a waste of good material for productive work. Far better keep them as slaves to the tribe and devour them by degrees in the shape of their product, less their keep, for the benefit of the entire gentile community. This view gradually prevailed. Cannibalism slowly died out, and its memory was only retained by the high ceremonial of religious human sacrifices, at which time the flesh of victims was still cooked and solemnly consumed.[1]

Thus tribal enslavement of captives was a distinct advance in human conduct towards defeated and captured enemies. But the slaves of the tribe were outside the whole gentile community, under whose control they lived. Whether the victims were cannibals or vegetarians to start with made no difference to the lot of the prisoners. They had no rights; they could have no rights. The gentile system recognised no inferiority within the gens. Consequently the slaves remained in a state

[1] In the matter of habitual anthropophagy, also, it has been found, even in modern times, that the pig is a far more effective propagandist than the missionary. Pig, in fact, replaces man as food. A higher conception of human utility and a more genial conduct of appetite is based upon pork. In some regions also the cannibal is spoken of, among tribes who have abandoned the practice, as a person addicted to the consumption of "long pig."

of permanent subjugation, as human machines, to be used for any purpose the tribe, its chiefs and priests might decree. This advance itself was almost certainly due to an economic cause—namely, to the fact that it had become worth while for the tribe to keep captives alive in order to benefit by their labour as slaves. Therefore it was discovered that this course was distinctly moral: the enslavement of captives received such high ethical approval as was then obtainable. Lastly, this new custom of saving the lives of the vanquished went a step further, and religion blessed and sanctified that which economics had ordained and ethics justified. This rule of human progress will be found reasserting itself frequently at every stage of human development, whether the actual advance was at the particular time favourable to the general well-being of humanity or the reverse. Nobody could truthfully deny that the substitution of tribal slavery for tribal slaughter, killing by torture and cannibalism, was an amelioration of brutal savagery. Nevertheless, viewing the results produced throughout the ages, it may be questioned whether the institution of slavery was not in the end more cruel than the horrible customs it displaced. Economic and social progress, however, takes no account of the martyrdom of man in its inevitable course, nor has it any sense whatever of morality or religion.

In the early days of tribal and patriarchal slavery which followed upon gentile and communal society of blood-relationship, equality and democracy, the treatment of slaves seems to have been relatively good and even kindly. Though forming no part of the tribe or gens, and thus wholly without personal status or individual or collective influence, there is nothing to show, from the tribal slavery which remains in different parts of the world, that slaves were subjected to cruelty in working for the tribes when this fate, instead of torture and death, befell them. They received food, clothing and housing as they did before their defeat and capture; they were free to intermarry among themselves according to their own rites and customs; their labour was little harder than it had been for them as free tribes-people, though the product belonged to their masters instead of to themselves. Under favourable conditions, the tribes which possessed slaves were better provided with the necessaries of life than those who did not, and the warriors of

the conquering tribe were left more free to attend to the business of war than they were before. The slaves, that is to say, did much of the work of production. But, exchange being yet in its infancy, and private property on any considerable scale unknown, there was no such thing as the accumulation of wealth for the purpose of getting more wealth for the tribe and its chief, elective or hereditary. Nor were there any elaborate domestic services to be performed, failure in which brought down merciless flogging or even death upon the slave culprit at a later stage.

There was plenty of everyday brutality and cruelty in connection with religious rites, erection of great buildings or completion of other important tribal work. It was part of savage or barbarian ceremonial. But little of the cold, calculating torture which was inflicted later, at the caprice of a slave-owner, or in order to screw more labour out of the slaves, was to be found under these tribal conditions. The slaves themselves, in spite of all their social degradation, still formed part of the tribe. So it was when private property had become the chief social institution, when man was completely dominant inside as well as outside the household, and descent had begun to be reckoned through the father instead of the mother, inheritance following the same line. At this period, also, slavery was comparatively mild. Thus when the nomadic period of flocks and herds had been reached, and patriarchal authority with individual ownership was the rule, the slaves of the polygamous household formed part of this great family. The personal relations existing between the owner-in-chief, his sons and other relations and the slaves who belonged to them were not of a harsh character. This, although it was during that period probably that exchange first became important, and the accumulation of wealth as wealth, not only in flocks and herds, but in articles of luxury, and even in gold and silver, began. In like manner the earlier agricultural slavery which arose as tillage slowly supplemented the breeding and pasturing of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, etc., was still unaccompanied by extreme severity in any of the countries where these stages of development were successively attained. The free peasant owner, whether European or Asiatic, worked on the land with his free family, or in company with his slaves, and all evidence

goes to show that under these circumstances likewise the slaves were in close relation with the freeholder and his household, and were generally well treated rather than the reverse.

How long this transition period lasted, from gentile communism to fully developed private property as the chief and guiding institution of social life, accompanied by domestic and field slavery, we do not know. Doubtless many hundreds or even thousands of years. However long the development may have taken, it was very short in comparison with the endless ages covered by the gentile and communist systems. Yet we have stone inscriptions which conclusively prove that highly organised communities with private property, monogamy, and all the basic institutions which gave rise to the promulgation of the commandments were in existence and flourishing thousands of years before Moses brought down his copy of injunctions from Mount Sinai.

It is indeed only quite recently that the stupendous epochs of time necessary to account for and explain man's periods of growth have been understood and appreciated. Though the immensely greater portion of these ages of the slow uprising from ape-like forms and casual subsistence to the complete human being with some command over nature, prior to the coming of civilisation, was occupied by gentile and communistic societies, still the comparatively short periods embraced by the early and later civilisation founded upon private property and the various forms of slavery cannot be estimated at less than many tens of thousands of years. The discovery that the ruins of great cities in the valley of the Euphrates and the Tigris are built upon many layers of other great cities previously existing on the same spot has alone vastly extended our conception of the space of time required to bring our ideas of the length of the successive stages of human life on the planet into accordance with the truth. There are no breaks or wide gaps in the history of the race. The divisions of the stone age, the bronze age, the iron age, of the communal age, the slave age, the serf age, these and other attempts at broad and easy systematisation of the lives of our remote ancestors lead to error if used as more than very rough approximations to what really occurred. Each stage of progress faded slowly and almost imperceptibly into the next and the next and the next. As man-

kind advanced all the different layers of successive development might be observed to be going on at one and the same time. This, indeed, though not so markedly, is the case throughout the world to-day.

Tribal slavery, then, the enslavement of captives to the tribe, where all captives were the slaves of all gentiles, was probably the first step towards the breaking up of the complete social arrangements founded upon the gens and blood-relationship. It introduced into the tribal and communist harmony an incompatible and insoluble element which was from the first at variance with the democratic methods that formerly prevailed. The economic effect on the tribe need not have been disruptive. The increase of comfort for the gentile members of the tribe, assuming that the slaves produced more than they were able to consume, would not have upset the whole system nor have rendered the continuance of gentile communism impossible. There could have been no accumulation of wealth for the purpose of piling up a surplus beyond any actual needs of the tribe. Even if the chiefs by degrees desired an exceptional share or more elaborate surroundings than the ordinary members of the tribe, this would not necessarily have modified the gentile and economic forms. For as yet there was no systematic exchange between tribe and tribe, still less between individual owners. Nor was there much personal wealth worth inheriting. Each tribe sufficed for itself, produced for itself, distributed for itself, fought for itself, conquered or was defeated for itself, and finally held slaves for itself.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE BEGINNING OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

With exchange, however, another new element was introduced into tribal life; and, impossible as it is to trace actually the early influence of this purely material and economic factor in the growth of human society, it appears almost certain that here, following upon the greater command by man of the power to produce wealth for use, we have the cause which induced all the other great changes extending over centuries. The rudimentary forms of exchange are curious enough. No serious attempt, as far as I know, has been made to tabulate them. They appear at first as a sort of "permissive grab," mutually exercised by the chiefs of the tribes. A chief, elected or hereditary, visiting the chief of another friendly tribe, sees some article, useful or decorative or lethal, which he needs for the purpose of his tribe, or, possibly, for his personal gratification. This he asks for as a gift. The gift is by custom never refused. At a later date the donor exercises in turn his right to commandeer, in all good tribal fellowship, something which, in like manner, strikes his fancy, or is suggested to him as a desirable gift to ask for by his fellow-tribesmen. As their wealth grows and varieties of produce increase, frequently the custom of barter follows. There is, nevertheless, no money, nor any means of valuing the respective products which each desires to obtain on some terms from the other for the common advantage of the two tribes. Pure barter of this kind entails a vast deal of haggling, but not necessarily any personal or private accumulation of wealth. This, however, follows, probably in the first instance in the hands of the chiefs who conduct the tribal exchange. One of the earliest forms of this private property consists of the slaves whom the superior prowess of the elective chief in leadership or courage has been instrumental in capturing for the tribe in war. Here would commence

the new element of absolute ownership in favour of the man, the hero in war and outside organiser of victory, as against the woman, the agent of peace and the mistress of the household. A revolution in gentilism indeed!

However this may be, it is practically certain that in the higher stage of barbarism, coincident in the Eastern Hemisphere with the development of cattle production, the growth of flocks and herds, and the discovery of iron, which slowly, very slowly, replaced both stone and bronze for the supply of tools and weapons, the heads of tribes or chiefs in war and in peace became wealthy owners of private property, notably of slaves. This property gave, first to the tribe, and afterwards to the individual who possessed it, the means of enjoying much better fare than could be obtained before, thus strengthening the men for war. But what was still more important, the slaves furnished a constantly increasing surplus of such products for exchange. The position of the possessor, then, became in this way more and more dominant, as private property more and more asserted itself against communal ownership. Inheritance of this property became a serious matter.

The rights of the gens and the agnates on the female side could not permanently hold their own against the closer ties of kindred, as they began to exist between a father and *his* children. In the group family and the loosely paired family women held the first place in the communal tribe and household, descent being reckoned through the woman and not through the man, with succession regulated in the same sense. But the strictly monogamous family, fortified by increase of wealth and private property in such wealth, transformed and revolutionised the entire gentile system. The gens itself did not alter its own constitution, except that the male section assumed, in the household as well as in external affairs, the dominant position. Equality ceased in the family. Equality ceased in the tribe. Democracy and permanent public control could not continue where equality of condition and wealth had ceased to be. With the recognition of the supremacy of man in the household, and inheritance through him to his children, the old order completely changed for the worse in regard to the status of woman. She, in the course of time, either by bargain or capture, left her own gens, and went, a strange woman, into the strange gens of

her husband, whose order became her order, and his totems and deities her totems and deities.

The economic advance under gentilism, by way of enslavement, exchange and the institution of private property on a relatively large scale, was thus instrumental in leading up to civilisation as we know it. A stupendous social revolution! The greatest, as already said, yet known in the history of the human race. Here begins the crucial differentiation of the tribe and gentile unity of each for all and all for each into the conflicting interests within the same so-called community, which later produced that social and economic anarchy of competition, antagonism of classes and oppression of the majority, alike of women and of men, that we recognise as modern civilisation.

In order to thread our way out of the maze of these unconscious developments we must rise to a sufficient height above the many obstacles that the investigator encounters on the level ground, and thus discover the clue which leads to an intelligent appreciation of all the surroundings. Even so, there is as yet no possibility of verification at the critical point. Nowhere can we say with confidence: "Here gentile society ceased; here private property became dominant; at this juncture sexual relations were completely modified, and man became master thenceforth of private property in the tribe and of all that the tribal arrangements betokened." The progress of the family and its accompanying economic growth was continuous, regardless alike of the general ethic or the anterior ideas of the mass of the members of the tribe and its slaves, when enslavement of captives became the rule.

The stage of advance which gave the clearest evidence of the new tendency was the pastoral period in Asia and on the European frontier already referred to. Some have gone so far as to assume that this was the first great division of social labour —namely, the division of the cattle-breeding and the pasturing tribes from the others on the same level of barbarism who continued to devote themselves to the old methods of production of food. It was much easier and more advantageous to capture, tame and breed animals than to hunt them down and kill them. Tame animals increased of themselves, with little superintendence, where sufficient pasture already existed and the climate was favourable.

Whole tribes of various men devoted themselves to this systematic development of flocks and herds. Tribal slaves helped them to extend the field of their production in every sense. They produced more and better food by this method of depasturing flocks and herds than the other tribesmen. Not only so, but they became possessors of very different products from those formerly at their disposal. All the necessaries for a higher standard of life were growing up around them. They produced abundantly what they wanted for themselves and a considerable surplus which increased as time went on. Everything that cattle, sheep and goats could supply the more fortunately placed of these tribes had in great quantity, in addition to all the meat they required, and more. Skins, wool, woven goods, milk, cheese and the like they could now exchange for such articles as they desired, without the slightest risk of shortage or hardship for themselves; therefore barter, which was formerly fitful, gradually became systematic. First through elected tribal chiefs and then through heads of households who developed into owners of the flocks and herds with slaves as part of the private property at their disposal. From this point to the accumulation of wealth in individual hands was no long step. So habitual did barter become that a token of exchange was necessary, and slaves as well as cattle themselves became forms of money.

Yet the tribal and gentile relations survived. Though their original basis of tribal communism and sexual relationship was completely transformed, the ancient democratic usages still persisted, and the continuation of gentes who formed the historic settlements and cities of Europe and Asia closely resembled in their early institutions the tribes which had reached the same stage of development in the New World. Though the more rigid conclusions have been modified in some details, it is now generally admitted that Morgan's explanation of the growth and co-ordination of the gentile institutions in Greece, Rome, Germany and Europe as a whole is correct; that the change from the matriarchal to the patriarchal family within the gens occurred in similar fashion in all countries; that slavery and the settlement of strangers within the limit of the purely gentile communities for trade and protection still further shook the basis of the old gentile system; that the gentile families for a

long period assumed and were accorded a position of superiority over the other chance settlers; and that the security of life and property ensured by the abandonment of the purely pastoral and the acceptance of agricultural life, with a common rallying point, finished the overthrow of the exclusively communal and blood-relation period of human progress.

To all appearance, this first great social revolution from communal to individual property and from matriarchal to patriarchal control over the household, the reckoning of descent and inheritance of personal property occurred in the course of ages, without any resort to force, or any organised opposition within the gentes themselves. The change was not only slow but unconscious. Neither the individual nor the collectivity understood what was going on, nor the effect that would be produced. Private property in wealth, which had been inconceivable to the gentile in savagery and barbarism, became now a part of the common social life of the time. All the ancient aggregations of city population arose in the same way. Nor, up to the period of the further growth of private property, which dominated the entire society and forced on a still more crucial change of organisation, was there any marked difference between the settlements in the Old World and the New, or in the scattered island communities. Athens, Babylon, Nineveh, Corinth, Antioch, Rome, Jerusalem, Selencia, Ctesiphon, Tyre, Sidon, Carthage, Byzantium, the commercial cities on the Mediterranean were all built up on gentile origins similar to those which led to the establishment of Mexico and the Inca capital of Peru. The latter centres never attained to the next stage of human culture; but the accounts of Spanish and native writers show clearly how far they had advanced on the road towards civilisation before invasions destroyed their natural evolution.

The gathering together of the gentes in fortified camps and permanent settlements simply strengthened and extended the tendency towards the federation and coalescence of friendly tribes, already bound together by blood ties and treaties. Though they had not as yet entirely thrown aside their gentile methods, they took with them to their common central home their private property in personal goods, their male predominance in the household and the tribe, their developing system

of the exchange of their surplus produce, and above all their slaves, agricultural and domestic, which were together destined inevitably to carry to completion the fateful revolution conditioned by property and class antagonism which thenceforward constituted the history of the race. With the invention and habitual use of money in any form, whether cowries or cattle, leather or iron, accumulation of movable property in private hands was strengthened, and common ownership, except of land, gradually disappeared. The gentile tribes who founded the settlement or city became the aristocracy, the patricians, the rulers of the growing community.

But unity and brotherhood no longer existed within the gentes themselves. There was an ever-growing rivalry for personal wealth and public domination. By degrees there gathered around the original settlers a large body of slaves and an increasing number of incomers from the outside, who resided in the city as freemen, in order to obtain greater security for their persons and property and better opportunities for carrying on their tillage, manufacture and family life. The wars against neighbouring settlements became now purely wars of plunder. Their object was to seize the wealth and the women of the adjacent community, above all to obtain more and more slaves, for cultivation and exchange, the latter becoming the chief motive, as the process of agriculture and production improved.

Yet the revolution was still incomplete. Ancient communism, ancient gentile customs, gentile relationships, gentile methods of election to public offices, gentile traditions and control generally maintained their ground. The age-old forms of democratic gentile organisation survived into the new period, to which they could not be conveniently adapted. So little were the inhabitants accustomed to restraint from above that a condition not far removed from anarchy threatened. In order to avert this menace to the prosperity of the incipient city, the first institution, distinctly anti-gentile, yet recognised as essential to ensure peaceful progress, appears to have been the establishment of organised police. But policemen were even less popular then than they are now. Settlers who had been brought up in the old ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity as practised among the tribes felt it would be a degradation to themselves to take up such repressive duties, however necessary

these functionaries had become. The conservatives of the time clung to the watchwords of the French Revolution; the progressives were all for a police. The police, therefore, was set on foot. Still so deep-rooted was the opposition to the force on the part of freemen, whether gentiles by birth or settlers who had come in severed from any gentile connection, that in most of the great cities of antiquity all the rank and file of this new body consisted of slaves. Protection of property was regarded as a menial occupation. About the same period prostitution, the inevitable complement of strict monogamy, made its appearance. Civilisation had manifestly begun.

## CHAPTER V

## LABOUR UNDER COMMUNISM

In all this period of human communistic life, based upon common property and common distribution, its unification of social interests within the original unit, the gens, is strongly impressed upon us. It was impossible to think outside of this primal unity. From birth, through childhood, youth and maturity, to death, the whole was far more important to the individual than his or her individuality. There was no possibility of escape from collectivity in thought, word or deed. The growth of the gens and tribe with the very slow modification of its method of production and institutions, overshadowed all mere individual initiative in war or in industry. A great leader in attack on neighbouring tribes was but the controlled organism of the common force whose individual credit, great as it might be to himself, was part only of the general prowess of the group. Similarly the ablest inventor, owing all to his social surroundings and begettings, merely contributed of his individual capacity (obviously engendered by and in his gens and tribe) to the general advantage. Each and every advance in war and in peace was a collective gain which told to the benefit of all members of the group without exception. In participation of the results none was before or after other.

Thus throughout the lifetime of man upon this planet co-operation not competition has been the rule for infinitely the greater portion of his social existence. No other form of economic human relations was conceivable. Within the gens and tribe the entire ethic was a collective ethic. A table of laws based upon private property and the monogamous family would and could have had no meaning to a communistic gentile society. The Ten Commandments were hardly conceivable under such conditions. Nobody could understand what on earth they meant. Theft in our sense would have been a subject of ridicule; sin an abstraction outside human thought. What to

us also in sexual relations is immoral or incestuous to the savage and barbarian is quite decently proper. As already noted, marriage between first cousins on the maternal side would be regarded under gentile rules as monstrous, while prostitution for individual advantage would be an unimaginable infamy, and the neglect of the well-being of children a communal crime of the first magnitude.

Human conceptions for countless ages were, in short, completely governed in pure savagery, in modified savagery and in barbarism by the sentiments and instincts of the horde, of the group, of the gens, of the tribe, of the community, of the federation. Restrictions were sharp enough, horrors were terrible enough, but the interests of all restrained, dominated and directed the actions of each. Thus under these circumstances, when man has developed the gentile family, and has gained some slight knowledge of, and power over, nature, due to the long collective unconscious advance of social capacity, common work for the common good of the fraternal social unit with which men and women are irrevocably identified is as natural as eating, drinking, sleeping, dancing or fighting. There is nothing whatever that is irksome in such communal work. Instinct and reason are thoroughly harmonised: the collective and individual duty necessarily blend. Work and overwork for the gain of another is and must be unknown. Men and women, therefore, under such conditions labour, and when necessary labour very hard, because they have been assiduously trained from their earliest youth to labour, not by punishment but by continuous example and agreeable instruction. Work in their respective social spheres has become as essential a part of themselves as singing, dancing, running or other manifestations of physical health or well-being.

Labour, in short, is an inevitable but enjoyable part of the communal service—when the stage of self-support in and by the group has been reached—a section of the communal instinct of each gentile in his gens, of each tribesman in his tribe. What form that labour may take for each individual depends upon the plane of communal culture which has been attained. There can be no stronger or more pressing motive to work for the society in which all participate than this unshakable sense of communal service. But where this sense is lacking and physical

disability or mental laziness engenders a shirker, then the collective pressure on that shirker, male or female, becomes severe indeed. There is as little tolerance of useless mouths in a human communal society as there is in a beehive. Sharing in the product demands that the sharer should take full part in producing and distributing the produce to be shared. Where communal sense of this fails to produce its influence, or where incapacity—as with invalids and the aged—is unavoidable, there intolerance of bootless existence manifests itself in a repellent form. Yet as regards the aged, those who are persuaded to retire from life on this account actually welcome their dismissal as a portion of their duty to their fellows of the commune. Custom rises superior even to death. Communal instinct of service by itself is more powerful than fear of the lash or torture as an incentive to work.

Communism, in fact, in any shape, is so far from being contrary to human nature that human beings have lived well and happily under its dispensations for countless centuries. It solved beforehand on a low plane many of the problems which are exercising the greatest minds of civilised countries to-day. It shows us a system of human association, in which, on a small scale and with many incidental drawbacks, due to the low stage of development then reached, mankind could co-operate to common advantage, and individual and class antagonism were unknown within the limits of the group. No difficulties were, so far as can be ascertained, experienced in the organisation of labour or the distribution of wealth. Labour for all and by all was the foundation of communism : enjoyment of wealth produced by and for all was its superstructure. General social equality was the rule.

Not until slavery—the collective or individual mastery of human beings without property, social status or personal freedom by other human beings who enjoy all three—not until after ages upon ages of communism, when enslavement of men by men became the means of creating and accumulating surplus wealth for personal advantage, instead of for communal use, did the conception of the irksomeness of work, the inferiority of useful labour, and the necessity for the scourge, torture, starvation, imprisonment and threat of death to impel men and women to perform useful social service, enter the

human mind. Then all idea of common work for the common good gradually disappeared. Labour itself became degrading in the eyes of those who neither toil nor spin. However humane may be the form of slavery, forcible compulsion by masters in some shape is always in the background. There can be no greater social change than this. It cuts at the very root of human solidarity. Savages and barbarians were treacherous, ruthless and desperately cruel in their dealings with hostile tribes; many of their domestic and religious customs were revolting to us in the highest degree; but, within the limits of their respective groups, social equality and rude democracy prevailed. Neither is possible under any form of private property and slavery. Slavery is the negation of social equality, and the inevitable introduction of a series of social antagonisms.

Communism and social equality are the indispensable bases of social and economic freedom. In the early communal gentile order man was subject to no direct compulsion to work for others for the benefit of those others; woman was free from direct economic subjection; all members of the group or tribe had public rights; the labour of every member told to the advantage of every other member; the right to work and the duty to work formed a recognised portion of the free communal service; all shared the general common wealth, all suffered from the general common injury; if one section of the gens or tribe underwent privation the whole group was undergoing similar shortage; if one section was well provided with food all were equally free from want; each and all participated in common danger, common defeat and common victory. The means of creating wealth were small, but in the full development of communism they were sufficient, and were entirely under the control of the members of the gens and tribe. Wrong done to one member of a gens was a wrong done to and to be avenged by every member of the gens. The religious rites of each gens, like its totem, were the peculiar property of the gens itself.

Here, on a low plane, was social unification of life and interest maintained and cherished by mankind, remains of this form of society, once universal, surviving even to the present day.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE EARLY CHATTEL SLAVE SYSTEM

In the early days of tribal and then patriarchal slavery, which followed upon the gentile and communal society of common property, close consanguinity and equality of sexes and conditions, the treatment of the slaves was fairly good. But there was no place for them, they not having been absorbed by adoption, except in permanent inferiority and almost animal degradation, within the society of that day, any more than there would have been for their conquerors in the tribes of the slaves themselves, had the result of the conflict gone the other way. The defeated had forfeited all right to their own existence. Enslavement was accepted on both sides as a recognised result of the fortune of war, just as torture and death would similarly have been received. Neither side could claim quarter under any circumstances.

The next generation of slaves, whose fathers and mothers had been brought into captivity and bred up in the tribe, inherited of necessity the servile position of their parents. It could not be otherwise. There was no known form by which slaves who begat children could secure any tribal rights for their offspring, nor could the tribal gentes bring them into their groups. Once slaves, always slaves, when war had decreed their subjugation. This went on from generation to generation. Success tended to extend and stereotype the system. Sudden death at the will of the captor always hung over the slaves in the earlier stage. Cruelty or kindness had nothing to do with the economic conditions as a whole. Either was a mere incident in the general growth. As nothing can be more cruelly indifferent to suffering than Nature herself, so no process can be more ruthless than unconscious economic and social human development. But there is no reason to believe that tribal slavery was specially cruel to the slaves; rather the contrary. Such examples of this collective form of human servitude as still survive in different

parts of the world are, on the whole, less brutal as compared with the general social conditions around them than the private ownership which slowly followed.

The slaves were in their own persons free and independent tribesfolk, though their product was owned and partitioned by the master tribe and its chiefs instead of by themselves. What helped, however, to spread the system when once begun was that, generally speaking, the tribes owning numerous slaves had a greater abundance of what they required for their own communal subsistence and welfare than tribes which had adhered to the old time-honoured custom of immediate and wholesale immolation of their enemies.

In this way, also, the warriors of the conquering tribe were left freer to qualify themselves for, and attend to, their business of war than they were before. Their slaves, that is to say, performed with the women the bulk of the productive work, or could even be used to strengthen the forces of their masters for attack or defence. In another direction, likewise, tribal slaves were convenient. As barter and exchange made way slowly under tribal and communal social forms, slaves themselves might be used, and were used, like cattle—likewise a portion of tribal ownership in pasturing countries—for the purposes of facilitating such traffic as a means of exchange. Nevertheless, while exchange was in its infancy and private property, except in purely personal effects, unknown, there was as yet no accumulation of wealth for the recognised purpose of obtaining more wealth for the tribe through the trade conducted even by chiefs elective or hereditary. This came gradually, at a later stage and under very different conditions.

Even when private property was initiated, and man was master inside as well as outside the patriarchal home, slavery was comparatively mild. The slaves of the patriarchal household, whether the general life was pastoral or agricultural, formed part of the polygamous or monogamous family, their relations to its various members being of a personal and not of a harsh, pecuniary character. Slaves aided their masters and their womenkind in the depasturing and care of the flocks and herds, performed the various duties in connection with removal from one camping ground to another, as well as in preparing the various articles required for use, the surplus of which came

by degrees into habitual exchange. Similarly, the earliest agricultural slavery, which came into play for the individual owner of private property in land, and grew as tillage replaced and supplemented the pastoral life of breeding and feeding cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, etc., was not accompanied by excessive severity in the countries where these stages of development were successively attained. It was production for immediate use of the producers and their neighbours; and there was still no economic motive for overwork or maltreatment of the slaves.

How long this transitional period of collective and then of personal family slavery lasted in the various countries where this social evolution went forward at different epochs it is impossible to say. But here again, as with the existence of communism itself, we have to revise all the old-world notions as to the length of time needed to proceed from one stage of human development to another, even where the changing forms seem to betoken the certainty of forcible overthrows—of which, within the respective societies themselves, there was and is little or no evidence. Thus the transformation of the purely "democratic" communism of the horde and the gens was not altered, in so far as its internal economic and property relations were concerned, by the election of chiefs to preside over the tribe of which the various gentes formed parts, or even over the federations into which the tribes were combined. These chosen rulers of the small consanguineous republics were, to begin with, no more than first among their equals, appointed temporarily or for life to carry on the functions of these communities, in peace and in war, for the benefit of all the members. There was originally no sanctity in their office and no hereditary claim of their sons to enjoy the succession.

When, however, such leadership and chieftainship did become hereditary, and families connected with the chief were recognised as superiors, then not only did equal temporary leadership merge into first an accepted and then practically an imposed authority, but the power of the chiefs over the slaves of the community expanded into something which was not far from absolute possession. Then also the trading away of slaves and women had previously been, in the early days of undeveloped exchange, a wholly collective bargaining

for collective advantage (though the actual business was done by the chiefs individually); it now became a portion of the transactions of the chiefs themselves. Thus the slaves of the tribe came to be chiefly the slaves of the head men of the tribe. They were, in fact, the first herds of beasts who formed the private property of their superior fellow-humans; just as in pastoral districts cattle, sheep, pigs, etc., followed on the same line and, like the slaves themselves, came to be used as means of exchange. At the same time, therefore, that collective and afterwards chiefdom slavery grew, private property and individual ownership was developing.

Personal property, at first entirely confined to weapons, clothing, tools and decorations, which at death devolved upon the gens of the deceased as communal heritage, extended not only to flocks and herds where these existed, or to other tame creatures such as turkeys, geese, pigs and so on, but to the produce of the soil, and eventually, but much more slowly, to the soil itself. Hence with slavery, even in its wildest form, and with private property in its least objectionable shape, the whole structure of human society was completely transformed. The motive force, the psychological and ethical and sexual relations were revolutionised. Man being supreme, and woman far more at his disposal than she was in the communal days, regarded not only the property and the household as his, but his male children as the heirs of the goods he had acquired absolute title to, including the slaves who worked for the benefit of himself and his family, or were parted with in return for other things he might need. Nevertheless these slaveowners and private property holders were still in the period of what economists call natural production. Their main object, that is to say, was to supply the needs and desires of their own families with the articles which they themselves were able to produce. What things they required that were obtainable from without they received by way of barter, in return for the surplus of their own stocks. Families might thus be living together as portions of a collection of families, still connected by the old gentile ties, under patriarchal leadership and control, enjoying considerable comfort. But this phase of sound growth, with its attendant slavery, might and did go on for long periods without the exchange of their superfluity affecting the general economic and

social relations. Not until slaves became mere human beasts, no longer for food but for creating wealth, or rather living tools, easily and cheaply replaced when worn out, did slavery by degrees assume the dominant social form of production. Then powerful aggregations of tribes went forth to conquer their neighbours for the sake of enslaving them, just as their ancestors had pursued the like course for the purpose of devouring them.

Slavery, in fact, both tribal and familial, did not become directly and personally cruel, or actuated by mere greed, until individual accumulation of wealth became the guiding motive; or until, thereafter, theocratic monarchy developed into great states. Early slavery in agriculture, where the small landowner cultivated his own soil side by side with his slaves, was not as a rule harsh in its effect on the slave. This slave, born on the holding, and bred into subservience to the tribe, the gentile family, or the small cultivator, not having known freedom, like his successors born out of due time on the other side of the Atlantic, had no keener sense of his personal degradation and inferiority than the bulk of the wage slaves have of their position in our society of to-day. They were accustomed to it: they could scarcely think out of it. So only outrageous misusage by their masters could drive them, not into conscious class revolts, but into individual or collective vengeance for wrong done. It is this sense of social permanence, by birth and training in their conception of life, which accounts in a way for the quiet acceptance of what seem to us unendurable human wrongs, even though precisely similar wrongs, undergone in a different way, pass unnoticed all round us.

Writers on slavery still commonly assume that it was essential for a small minority of men to have absolute control over a much larger number of their fellows in the early days of human society. Otherwise mankind as a whole could have made no progress from primitive hordes and general savagery onwards. Thus, according to this view, chattel slavery was from the first inevitable, in order to compel men to work for the advantage of humanity. No slavery, no organised society.

M. Wallon, who published his exhaustive work on chattel slavery nearly eighty years ago, opens his first volume with the following sentence:—"Slavery was the foundation of ancient society and, however far we go back to the origin of peoples,

we find some form of servitude among the elements of their civilisation." Such complete misapprehension and misrepresentation was, perhaps, excusable at the beginning of the nineteenth century, though even then the truth was known to thorough students of sociology. But there are still scholarly writers who take this for granted in leading works of reference, nearly three generations later. Such a view, as we have seen, is quite incorrect. The domination of men by men was wholly unnecessary in order to induce groups of human beings to work together for the joint benefit of all; nor did this communal life prevent inventions and discoveries of a most remarkable character from being made.

Permanent enslavement had its origin in the capture of large masses of men, women and children in war. Defeat in battle gave slavery its ethical basis, and no further sanction was needed. That the slaveowners of to-day might, by a turn of the wheel of fortune, become the slaves of the same people whom they had conquered previously, cast no doubt upon the sanction given to successful force. There was no appeal from the decision of war, except by an endeavour to upset it by another war.

The great civilisations of antiquity, civic and theocratic, were built up on chattel slavery, instituted by enslavement of captives from hostile societies. But there were apparent exceptions to the general law of growth, vigour and decay under the slave system. With the breakdown of slavery the empires dependent upon this form of production inevitably fell. Yet a short survey of the history of China shows that this has not been the case with infinitely the most ancient civilisation in existence. Small landownership and skilled artisanship have there held their own for thousands of years, against any form of slavery or serfdom, as the main basis of Chinese society. Neither can it be alleged that slavery among the Jews took the shape either of permanence of caste domination or the unbroken rigour of private personal ownership. Slaves in Judea were supposed to be manumitted by law after seven years' continuous service, and all slaves were emancipated definitely once in every fifty-year period. Obviously, laws which enjoined such rapid release from personal ownership for slaves were not enacted by rulers or accepted by a people who believed in

the inevitable economic necessity of slavery; although the forms of production and distribution remained nearly the same from time immemorial. However much the statutes in favour of slaves may have been evaded—and the strong denunciation by Jewish priests and legislators of serious malpractices in the matter shows that they were frequently broken—the fact remains that among the Hebrews, likewise at the height of their power, slavery was not at all regarded as an indispensable social and economic institution; although they had full experience of its advantages and disadvantages under the same methods of production that prevailed before and after its commencement.

In the great Asiatic empires and Egypt, with their theocratic monarchies and powerful priesthood, slavery, both public and personal, became part of the religious system, though it existed side by side with independent private property in land and cultivation by freeholders and leaseholders, as shown in ancient records discovered in the great cities of Assyria and Babylonia. Under the caste system, where that was stereotyped by religious enactment and custom, the relation of the slaves to the higher castes, and especially to the priestly caste, was one of unrelieved degradation. By this system immense public works were constructed and vast wealth was accumulated. As measured by the standards of antiquity, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Asia Minor, Persia were the seats of wealthy empires.

In Europe similar results were achieved by slave labour. It was chiefly by the labour of slaves that the West, the East, the South piled up those great riches which were seized by the Romans and transferred to Rome. While, therefore, slavery was not indispensable in ancient times for the creation of well-being, it is nevertheless certain that its universality, at a given stage of progress, proves that the institution was essential to the development of Mediterranean civilisation. And large numbers of slaves could only be obtained by conquest. Slavery on the scale needed could not safely be imposed upon even nominally free citizens, however inferior their economic position might be, and no matter how completely the position of the ruler was fortified by accepted religions. One of the most powerful and able of the rulers of Egypt compelled his own free

people to construct with infinite toil a vast and practically indestructible monument to himself for his own permanent glorification. But this waste of their labour roused even the passive and long-enduring Egyptians to such furious discontent that his successors found it more convenient, as well as less dangerous, to obtain the necessary man-power for similar bootless constructions by successful wars, and the consequent importation of vast numbers of slaves from without. Organised slave raids of this character formed part of the foreign policy of all the slave monarchies. This was not always the acknowledged object of their wars, which were sometimes carried on for the more obvious ends of direct plunder of riches already accumulated, or for the humbling of a rival potentate whose ascendancy was obnoxious to the attacking ruler. But this economic and social motive had increasing influence, as is evidenced by the importance attached on the monuments to the numbers of slaves marshalled behind the war chariot of the conquerors, in these records of their triumphs. Slavery required a constant supply of slaves from without for the maintenance of the system within. Home breeding rarely, if ever, sufficed to meet the demand for more slaves to replace those lost by the wear and tear of slave life.

## CHAPTER VII

## SLAVERY IN GREECE

There is no accurate record of the development from tribal, chiefdom and patriarchal slavery to the period of complete chattel slavery. The nearest approach to such a record is in the case of Greece and Rome. Here again, as in the instance of the duration of communism, of the change from matriarchal to paternal descent, of the growth of the institution of private property and the transformation from the gentile society to the citizen polity and state—from *societas* to *civitas*—the length of time occupied was probably far greater than is as yet generally recognised. It was accompanied in each country where the full evolution was accomplished by the simultaneous growth of exchange as an economic factor, until the power of that impersonal and for centuries wholly uncomprehended agent of accumulative and individual tyranny, money, overshadowed all else, and led, in state after state, to genuine social revolution. Moneylending, usury, mortgages, commerce, production and mining for profit, with the ever-magnified strength of the merchant, helped to extend the sphere of slavery, and to put the slaves quite outside the category of independent human beings. Capture in war universally obliterated freedom for the captives save in those exceptional cases where ransom was permitted and taken advantage of. There was no evading this recognised rule. Might, as already said, constituted ethical right, not only in Asia and Africa, but among the most capable and cultured peoples of Europe. Debt acted in the same way as the agent of slavery at home.

For centuries before the complete organisation of slavery the free farmers on the land and the freemen workers in the cities carried on their employment, and constituted their trade combinations outside the slave system which was slowly growing up. As in Attica and other city states, the power of usury went hand in hand with the development of slavery. The farmer on

the land, or the workman and trader of the city who fell into the grip of the usurer, was in the long run forced by his relentless creditor into the ranks of the slaves as the last means of paying his debt. But this was a slow process of increase in the home production of slaves, slower even than the domestic reproduction of the slaves themselves.

For domestic and farm slavery the slave's condition was precarious enough, yet the relations between master and bondsman were at least human. But work in mines was, during the whole slave period, the worst fate that could befall a man. There was no personal relation, nor any touch of humanity in it. Brought directly into contact with the compelling motive of immediately realising production for profit, the life of the slaves in the gold and copper, and later in the silver, mines was one perpetual routine of slow torture. This applies not only to the slave labour in the mines of Greece, Sicily and Egypt, but likewise to the mines worked by the Carthaginians and afterwards by the Romans in Spain, in Gaul and other countries. The slave miner was the soulless, material instrument for wealth production in fact, which philosophers and jurists declared him to be in theory. In the hey-day of the slave system, when slaves could be easily and cheaply obtained by capture in war, by piracy in peace, or by the selling into slavery of debtors by the usurer, the life of the slave was of no account. The calculation simply was, how much gold or silver he could be forced by repeated floggings to obtain before utterly exhausted human nature relieved his sufferings by death.

The quantity of treasure thus gained was enormous. In one district alone in Spain at a late period 40,000 slaves were continuously employed; and probably Hannibal's army in Italy was to a large extent supported by the produce of his rich silver mines near Saguntum which have never been rediscovered. All these mines, and the mines in Gaul as well, after the Roman conquest of that province, were steadily worked with the same ruthless disregard for human life and human suffering. It was a pure matter of calculation. If more gold could be won at less cost by working men to death under the lash than in any other way, then that method was at once adopted and persistently applied. This was the system in use at Laurium at the time of the successful rising. But though

the slaves were victorious for the moment, that did not suffice to change the methods of working in the long run or to ensure more humane treatment. Thus the general conception of Greek and particularly Athenian mildness in relation to slavery is quite a misconception. The great slave market at Delos, where ancient writers tell us that arrangements were constantly maintained for offering and selling as many as 10,000 slaves a day, was of course a Greek centre of this huge trade. The steady demand and ready sale for eunuchs at a high price on this mart proves also that, though the Western Greeks might not use these unfortunate appurtenances of polygamous civilisation for themselves, they were quite ready to procure them for others.

The ablest of Greek thinkers, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, Socrates, Plato, could not even imagine a state of society where the chattel slavery to which they were accustomed would not continue as the foundation of their civilisation, and the economic basis of industry, art, science and culture generally. Yet Plato had been made a slave himself, in the course of one of those changes which were so common in the political affairs of his day. Aristotle, of course, considered slaves as a necessary and permanent portion of family life. His speculation as to the function of wholly mythical automatic machinery, whereby slavery could be avoided, is drawn from the conceptions of the poet Hesiod. At the disposal of the deified ironmaster, Vulcan, in his labours such machinery might work alone, subject only to the supervision of Vulcan himself. If the shuttle could weave of its own motion, and the lyre could play of itself, then also the builder might need no artificers nor the master any slaves. As things were, however, slaves performed, under the control of the master, those services with which the gods alone could dispense. Slaves were, in fact, indispensable human instruments of production like other animals. As a great reward for their good behaviour or for some conspicuous deed of bravery they might be given their freedom, and even accorded the rights of citizenship. These entailed the power and advantages of entering the competitive stage of freemen, and working for wages, advantages of which the slaves were by no means always inclined to avail themselves, hesitating to sacrifice the security of their dependent position,

with all its manifold drawbacks, for the uncertainty of a life of liberty.

Aristotle returns to this subject of the inevitability and the ethical status of slavery several times, having always, apparently, on his conscience, an unexpressed, perhaps half-conscious, doubt as to whether all slavery was not opposed to "nature." Thus the human being who does not belong to himself by nature, but belongs wholly to another man, is a slave by nature; is, therefore, the property of somebody else, and consequently a mere chattel, though a man all the same. But the main origin of this slavery being capture of men, women and children in and by war, the man who was perhaps the ablest thinker of all antiquity found himself, after all, greatly puzzled to give an equitable or even legal status for this same chattel slavery which he contended was not only inevitable, but in itself just. So in his usual laudable endeavour to be quite clear and precise he becomes, of course entirely against his own will or intention, confused and even contradictory, though he imputes the same self-contradiction to others. Some, he avers, with whom the philosopher himself does not agree, put forward this identical plea that right founded upon custom justifies slavery due to success or defeat in war. But then the war itself which led to this slavery may have been unjust; and it cannot reasonably be affirmed that a man who is by this means unjustly enslaved is consequently a slave by nature. For then men of the highest families and noblest descent might be made slaves if taken prisoners in war and sold. But such persons ought not to be regarded as slaves at all. The outer barbarians, however—those who are not noble Greeks, that is to say—stand on quite a different level. There are, then, some who are necessarily slaves and others who under any circumstances never can be slaves.

So it all comes to this: that some human beings are slaves and others are free men and women owing to the decision of nature; that there are two different classes of mankind, the one, advantageously for society, destined to be slaves, the other beneficially ordained to be masters; that it is just and right that some should be under control and that others should govern as nature fitted them to do. In which case it is likewise just that the master being fit to rule should dominate the slave

who is unfit to rule. The slave, also, being under these conditions a piece of property, his owner can use this his chattel as he pleases and in quite a different way from that which is applicable to free men.

Throughout this strange medley of inconsequent argumentation "nature," it will be observed, plays much the same part as that which was ascribed to this abstract entity by certain superficial philosophers in the eighteenth century, some two thousand years later. Aristotle's attempt to give a natural, legal, equitable foundation to human slavery obviously failed as, from any point of view, it was bound to fail. For slavery had, in effect, become natural from man's familiarity with it as a universal institution. When Aristotle discussed its basis it had already grown up through many, many centuries, possibly even thousands of years, out of gradual but unconscious economic and social development, until men's minds were completely saturated with it as an inevitable outcome of all known, or hypothetically traceable, human relations in society. With all his Utopian effort in his Republic, Plato, like Aristotle, could not think outside its influence. Slavery had been, was and would be. The communism of the past, which alone had dispensed with it, was too far behind and too little known to occasion any doubt as to the permanence of the ownership of man by man; the communism of the future was too far ahead for the most brilliant philosopher to conceive of its approach, or to apprehend the causes of such social reintegration and personal emancipation.

The important fact for sociology is that Aristotle, with all his power of thought, of induction, of hypothesis, and vast capacity for analysis and ordering and marshalling of known facts, could not himself imagine or hypothetically construct any form of future society which would not rest upon slaves—slaves obtained by victory in war; slaves bred of slaves begotten in peace; and both condemned to penal servitude for life, not by the chances of battle, but by nature. When, in fact, he tried to give some ethical groundwork to this his inevitable subjection of men to men, of the vast majority to the comparatively small minority, we are confronted only by the vaguest phrases. The material and historic method of investigation was then impossible.

Still more remarkable, however, than the bemused perplexity of the great philosopher and jurist, who examined and recorded all the political and social institutions of his time, is the frame of mind of the slaves themselves, even of those who were quite recently enslaved: free men but yesterday, meeting in peace and fighting in war their successful antagonists on terms of perfect equality: slaves to-day to conquerors who were assuredly no better in any way than themselves. They accepted their new position, with resentment no doubt, and with hope of revenge upon the victors; but, nevertheless, they accepted it without organised revolt. So did all the slaves of Aristotle's period. Yet slaves formed the overwhelming majority of the population in each of the Greek cities at the period of their greatest prosperity, and in their dependent territories and colonies as well.

In Sparta the proportion of the slaves was still greater than elsewhere. Here the gentile aristocracy, perhaps the most thoroughly trained and organised warrior caste of all the ancient world, constituted so petty a minority of the people that they were in constant fear of their helots. They treated them with hideous cruelty, and had no hesitation in slaughtering them wholesale under circumstances of revolting treachery when they even imagined that any chance of a rising threatened. The butchery in cold blood of 2000 of the finest of these unarmed slaves, at one blow, was so horrible an atrocity that it appears to have shocked the not very sensitive feelings of the other slave-holding minorities in the Greek States. Yet in spite of this and other similar tragedies, in spite of the persistent miseries of their daily life, and their great superiority of numbers, there is no record of any successful revolt of the helots in the Spartan community. This is the more noteworthy since a considerable proportion of their slaves were trained to the use of arms, and thousands of them fought in battle side by side with their masters. Custom, which limited the range of the philosopher's mental vision, rendered it practically impossible for the slaves to survey the possibility of their own emancipation by conjoint effort.

Similarly in Athens, Ægium, Corinth, Thebes, Syracuse, Corcyra, there was passive acceptance of the existing state of things, notwithstanding the enormous disproportion between

the slave-owning class, with the freemen citizens, and the slaves. Long-continued custom, that is to say, here as in Sparta, had the same influence on the spirit of the slaves throughout Greece that religious ordinances, upheld by supernatural sanction and perpetuated from generation to generation by stereotyped castes, had on the same subjected class of the slaves of the Orient and Egypt. This, too, although when the slave period in Greece was at its height, freemen in a depressed condition were working for wages alongside the slaves, and there were besides considerable numbers of manumitted slaves. But numbers appeared to give them no confidence. Such partial plots as were set on foot were rendered futile by treachery among the slaves themselves. Only in the mines of Laurium, where a wholly atrocious system of working to death prevailed, against which the victims rose in a paroxysm of despair, and in the island of Chios, where the slaves eventually deserted their emancipator and went back to their servitude, were even temporarily successful revolts carried out. In Athens and Attica generally this is the more remarkable, since not only were the slaves, as elsewhere, immensely preponderant in numbers to the extent of fourteen slaves to one adult citizen, but they also provided from their ranks the entire body of armed police who were kept and paid in order to maintain security of life and property in the interests of their masters and the free citizens. Great precautions were at first taken against the likelihood of organised insubordination. But these measures gradually fell into abeyance, as it became evident that, whether the slaves were contented with their lot or not, nothing serious in the way of general upheaval need be apprehended.

This quiescence and obedience on the part of the slaves would have seemed to us, who live under another form of economic and social servitude, almost unintelligible, having regard to the circumstances which brought these men and their families under slavery—even had they been well treated and not greatly worse off than the free citizens who laboured for wages as artisans and the like. But this was not so. Although a contrast has frequently been made between the slaves of Greece and those of other countries, more particularly of Rome and Egypt, and although the Greeks were not so systematically cruel

as some peoples, their slaves were nevertheless badly treated. In ordinary life the domestic, industrial and even agricultural slaves may sometimes have enjoyed mildness and humanity, but there is quite enough to show that this consideration was but skin-deep. What happened to them if they were called upon to give evidence in any court of law proves clearly that slaves, even those who had been captured and enslaved but recently, and themselves guilty of no offence whatever, suffered under the most horrible disabilities. Their testimony was rarely received as trustworthy on either side, save after they had been subjected to torture of the most excruciating description, rivalling in ingenuity and horror the worst atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition. This was done as a matter of course, and the noblest of Athenian advocates and orators, so far from raising any protest against such legal outrages upon human nature, *insisted* upon their being carried out to the fullest extent.

The whole scheme of torture was pressed to the extreme limit of what is conceivable. Humane masters who hesitated, or refused, to submit their slaves to forms of the "question" which must not only inflict frightful agony upon the unfortunate victims, but might easily result in their physical ruin for life, would certainly lose their case and incur public obloquy into the bargain. Not only so, but any litigant who thought that slave evidence would be useful to him might, and frequently did, insist upon his legal right that slaves belonging to another master should also be conducted to the torture chamber. This was done if the party in the case who demanded that such evidence should be rendered would guarantee to pay the owner of the slaves the value of any damage, including death, that his chattels had sustained during these endeavours to elicit the truth from them by intolerable physical suffering.

When we consider all these undoubted facts, which are recorded as taking place every day, it is evident that the cultured and elegant Athenian democracy of free citizens was as much imbued with the very worst anti-human tendencies of their time as any of the less civilised nations around them, whom they stigmatised as barbarians. It is unnecessary to recite the terrible penalties for small offences committed by slaves, when, however innocent a slave might be, as a complete outsider in any case, he was liable to be handled in this manner

without redress. It is all summed up in the few words: no slave might give evidence in court on any matter unless he had been thoroughly well tortured beforehand. This was the view of the best men in Athens, a view which was acted upon to the full extent that was thought desirable, and as a matter of course. It was just and right that this should be done.

Knowing well that this dreadful physical suffering was what any of them might have to undergo, at any moment, if their master should happen to be dragged into legal proceedings, it becomes still more wonderful that such monstrous injustice did not impel the slaves to take up arms to avenge themselves, to free themselves, or to die in the attempt. But it was not so. Cold-blooded legal torture, carried to its utmost limit, like frequent severe corporal chastisement in the homes, or on the farms, failed to rouse the slaves to break through the ties of usage which bound their minds tighter than weights and chains confined their bodies. Time after time we see this same phenomenon throughout history: men under varying forms of servitude disinclined or unable to combine against their oppressors. When, by some accident, goaded into insurrection, momentarily successful, they can form no design except to inflict on others the tyrannous and degrading system from which they had suffered themselves. What renders this quiescence and apathy the more remarkable in Greece, and particularly in the case of Attica, is the fact that the slave-owning minority, gentile and insurgent, were constantly at variance among themselves, and were likewise frequently engaged in bitter warfare with their rivals outside. Yet the slaves looked on at these civil conflicts and external campaigns without any organised endeavour to take advantage of the mutual animosities between their respective masters. Nay, often, as already noted, they fought bravely on either side in their masters' cause, when the same courage and devotion and skill in the use of arms might have secured their own emancipation, at the cost of enslaving others.

Our admiration for the great works of Greek genius too often blinds us to the truth that Greece with Athens was herself the centre of perhaps the worst and most highly developed system of commercial conquest, usury, slave raids, piracy and general pecuniary infamy in the whole Mediterranean basin. The same highly cultured citizens who listened to and saw with

cordial appreciation the splendid plays of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and enjoyed the brilliant comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, not only treated their slaves in the abominable fashion spoken of above, but were terribly unscrupulous and treacherous in all their dealings with other peoples. The Romans themselves, those past masters in the art of profitable conquest and fraudulent rapine, learnt much of their financial rascality from the Greeks. This all shows that, as terrible oppression and cruelty fail to rouse resistance among those accustomed to a life of subjection, so the highest culture and intelligence, even when combined with a lofty ethic among their equals, have no power to soften or restrain the brutality and greed of a dominant class. And this appears to be the universal rule throughout the series of class antagonisms and slave forms which arose after the break-up of gentilism and communism.

Important, however, as Greek slavery was in its day, nowhere can the development of chattel slavery be traced so clearly and certainly, step by step, as in the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. That is the reason why Roman slavery, with its vast extent and importance in the history of European civilisation, has been taken as typical of this institution generally, outside Egypt and Asia. Other great states of antiquity, notably Carthage, Persia, India, Asia Minor, Assyria, Babylon, based their prosperity for centuries on slavery; but our knowledge of their economic and social life, even in the case of Egypt, is far inferior to that which we have of the life and institutions of Rome. Slavery in Greece, though in the main of the same character, and due to similar causes, was so much smaller in extent compared to the populations affected—even when the Greek colonies and the settlements in Asia Minor are taken into account—that, from the point of view of world history, it plays quite a secondary part. Sparta, which looms so large for us in the pages of Thucydides and in the institutions of Lycurgus, contained but 32,000 Spartan fighting men; while the estimate that these overlords had more than 200,000 helots and 120,000 semi-serfs is not improbably excessive. With Rome at the height of her domination we come to very different figures of population, both free and enslaved.

## CHAPTER VIII

## SLAVERY UNDER ROME

Why the tribes which settled on the Seven Hills, with the refugees and outlaws from other gentile communities who gathered round them, should have obtained such complete economic and political pre-eminence over all their rivals, some of whom were much richer and more powerful than themselves at the beginning of the struggle for supremacy, is one of the unexplained riddles of history.

The growth of Rome, from a rough gentile stronghold which served only as a rallying point for the tribal units and cultivators, to an aggressive Republic, followed the same lines that the consolidation of such groups into a city pursued elsewhere.

First there was in one district a collection of cattle-owners and farmers, mostly tribal; then a number of small private owners combined with a nucleus of the original gentile families who formed the aristocracy of the slowly increasing settlement; later the people from without came in, who, destitute of gentile rights, took advantage of the security for person and property afforded by the consolidation for defence within a small area. Thereupon followed inter-tribal fights for territory and women with other small groupings of the like kind in the immediate neighbourhood; thence deliberate attacks and trials of strength, by which a supply of slaves was secured by the victors; later on still the adoption of city, tribal and yeoman warfare as a means of enrichment by the plunder and enslavement of less adventurous or less piratical communities. As a consequence of the increase of wealth came the division into antagonistic classes within the city, the change from gentile equality, based upon blood-relationship, to grades of voting and political influence founded upon private property and the amount of such property owned by the voters—the whole of this progression, in more or less diversified forms, was common to other cities and states than Rome. But from the early days of the Republic the policy

of plunder for the sake of plunder became the guiding principle of Roman action. From a state liable to invasion by its neighbours and in danger from Gauls, Cimbrians and other hordes still in the gentile stage of social life, Rome grew gradually into the most formidable aggressive power of antiquity. With the supremacy over all Italy, slavery itself, with money, became an element of conquest, urging constantly to the acquisition of more slaves. The wealth acquired from victory gave an appetite for more victory out of sheer greed of gain. By the bitter irony of economics the freemen farmers and artisans, who constituted the armies which fought for the Senate and the people of Rome, effected, as will be seen, their own downfall and brought about the social subjugation of those who survived the great campaigns in East and West, by the very same triumphs which their proconsuls and generals celebrated as the most glorious achievements of the Roman Republic. Slaves captured in tens and even hundreds of thousands were inevitably sold cheap, for the markets soon became overstocked. Rich gentile and aristocratic families became enormous slave-owners. They purchased the captives with the accumulations of precious metals poured into the lap of the great families by their victorious relations, who led the Roman armies and administered the Romanised provinces subjugated by their soldiers. Nothing like this wholesale and systematic rapine throughout the entire civilised world then accessible has been seen in history. Unstinted aggression and plunder abroad was accompanied by economic oppression at home; and the wealth thus piled up added to the tribute expected, while the profits obtained in certain directions from slave labour were so enormous that luxury of every kind reached an unprecedented height. Luxury was accompanied by cruelty and sheer blood-lust, which the numbers of slaves gave every opportunity for gratifying.

Thus it came about that the old slave system, which gave some hope to the slaves, was supplanted by the new slave relations, which in practice destroyed for the most part any compensatory personal connection. The slave, however distinguished he might be by birth, race and high qualities, became in Rome a human chattel and nothing more. All this went on for generation after generation under the Republic. The names blazoned forth in our histories and our highest literature as

heroes and champions of freedom are precisely those men who were as unsurpassed in ruffianism and cruelty towards captives and slaves as they were treacherous and unscrupulous in their dealings with their own countrymen. Yet these very same people, like the Greeks, never hesitated to call upon the slaves to help them in their civil wars, by promises of freedom and well-being which were rarely or never kept.

Then following upon great campaigns in East and West came a series of risings of the slaves, so persistent, so determined, in more than one instance so well led, that even to-day, with all the facts before us, and looking on coolly down the centuries at the problems of the past, we can only marvel that the ruthless Roman aristocrats, with all their vigour and self-confidence, threatened by the Teutons and Cimbri and Mithridates from without, and these violent and partially successful attacks by revolting slaves within, should have succeeded in saving their terrible Republic from complete ruin. But they did. Even if they had won, slavery as a system had then become so deeply rooted in Rome and Italy, in Carthage and the Carthaginian possessions, in the whole basin of the Mediterranean and the East, that it is more than doubtful whether the slaves could have established a society based upon free labour.

The Romans shrank from no sacrifice in their ruthless determination to crush down the insurrections. Their aristocratic leaders knew that if the slave revolts spread in Italy or succeeded in the adjacent provinces, and they were even temporarily mastered by the subjugated class, another power than their own would come into being, whether the slaves were benefited by the change or not. In fact, they and their supporters would inevitably have been made slaves in their turn, if they had escaped from slaughter on the field of battle or from massacre in the towns to which they fled for refuge. But slavery as an institution would not have been abolished by the triumph of the slaves.

As it was, the successful Roman commanders, after victory largely aided by treachery, resorted to their familiar methods of striking terror and glutting revenge. The defeated slaves were crucified along the highways by tens of thousands. All the horrors of successful Asiatic warfare were re-enacted by the generals of the Roman Republic. And then the whole move-

ment of Roman conquest, Roman enslavement, Roman tribute-exaction, Roman usury, steadily pursued its course. Nevertheless the possibility of failure had stared them in the face. The struggles with Mithridates in the East, and the national hero, Sertorius, in the West, were going on at the same time that the issue of the servile wars in Italy and Sicily was hanging in the balance; and more than one of the armies needed for the defence of the Republic without were recalled for the suppression of the dangerous revolt within. But the victory had been achieved before they arrived. Slavery, dominated by the Roman legions under the leadership of the aristocratic caste, so fitly represented by Sulla, Cato the Younger, Brutus and Cicero, became more than ever the economic and social basis of Roman life and power.

Moreover, the irony of this development, the unconscious manner in which free men patriotically brought about their own ruin and degradation, was never more disastrously manifested than in the case of Rome's wars of conquest. It was the yeomen, the small farmers, the cultivators around the cities, who formed the backbone of the Roman armies. Mithridates and Hannibal, Pontus and Carthage, the great struggle for independence in Spain, the invasion of the Cimbri and Teutons, the Samnite attacks and the servile risings spoken of were all overcome by the inflexible courage and determination of the free Roman legionaries, *utrinque parati*, who fought in every part of the then known world under the banner of the S.P.Q.R. Yet the steadiness with which they marched on to victory, notwithstanding crushing defeats and even disasters for years in succession, brought in the long run nothing but expropriation and poverty to the survivors and their descendants. Their losses on the field of battle terribly depleted the ranks of the stalwart yeomen, giving them less power to encounter their class enemies in Italy. But above all, their victories worked them harm. These victories supplied the aristocrats and the risen wealthy plebeians, of whom Pompey the Great was the most successful example, with cheap and capable slaves, who were used as the great economic and social weapon to overwhelm for generations the small free farmers and capable artisans who had won the wars for Rome. The free cultivators were driven out of the field by slave-worked farms on a large scale.

This was most noticeable in Italy, but it went on everywhere. Given the conditions, the results were practically inevitable for the time being. Everything combined to defeat the upholders of the old system with its distribution of the public land. No distinctions were made. Slave-ownership, usury, aristocratic monopoly, wholesale bribery and shameless illegality told equally against the descendants of Sulla's magnificent soldiery, planted by him on land conquered from the enemy, and the families of old settlers, whose fathers and brothers had triumphantly upheld the greatness of the Republic. The vast slave-cultivated estates, with their cruel enforced toil and miserable slave prisons, made way in the country ; the plebeians and proletariat, for all their voting power and rights to free sustenance, were bribed, cajoled and brow-beaten out of their inheritance in the city.

The soldiers of Sulla themselves often found that the cultivation of the soil was a privilege of free citizens which involved toil and uncertainty beyond what they were willing to undergo in the process of apprenticeship to their business. The majority of them disposed of their holdings, and were ready again to take pay as soldiers and participate in such civil or foreign wars as might be afoot. Wars, in fact, and the resort to mercenary soldiery in order to wage them successfully at home and abroad, did nearly as much to uproot Rome's agricultural citizens from their holdings as slave-tilled large properties. Payment for military service was one of the great causes that distracted men from their occupation as cultivators, and brought them into the cities, during the entire period of Rome's ascendancy. And the uncertainty of their freedom may also have accelerated their movement citywards. For the hunting down of slaves was not confined to warfare on a large scale, conducted by the State in order to remedy the waste occasioned by the loss of slave life; nor did piracy at sea and slave raids along the coast, carried on as a regular business by the corsairs who had become a formidable power in the Mediterranean, finish the catalogues of danger to be incurred. There were risks at home : razzias along the highways and their neighbourhood, against which isolated farmers had little chance of being able to protect themselves, were frequent. Thus, during the entire life of the Roman slave system, a series of tendencies and causes existed which resulted

in the depression of the free labourer and the increase of the value of the slave. These circumstances make it the more remarkable that the freemen should have been able to continue their existence at all, and certainly do not support the contention that slave labour was necessarily unsatisfactory to its owners.

Even high-minded aristocrats, who sympathised with the people and as tribunes obtained the support of the plebeian order, were powerless to stem the tide of aggression by their own class. Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, who have come down to us through the centuries as the martyred heroes of the oppressed, despite their own high birth and culture and their descent from the great Scipio Africanus, notwithstanding the popularity first of the elder and then of the fiery younger brother, were both powerless to make head against the organised force of aristocratic greed over against them. Their laws in favour of wide landownership for the free farmers were rendered entirely nugatory, and the slave-owners won all along the line wherever their own immediate class and pecuniary interests were engaged. The Roman populace, like, indeed, the populace at nearly all periods of history, failed to support their champions when living, but uselessly glorified them when dead. Not only were the efforts of the Gracchi to secure for the Roman people their own public land abortive, but the magnificent vigour and eloquence of Caius, the younger brother, failed to obtain for the Italians rights of citizenship and voting. The political power of both brothers, though invested with all the authority of tribunes of the plebs, and supported by the great majority of the citizens, miscarried for two reasons: first, the economic and social force of the aristocratic class then dominant was still in full vigour, and strengthened, as already said, by the success on the field of battle of the soldiers of the people; second, neither of the Gracchi had the support of the army, which might have enabled them to achieve their ends for the time being against the oligarchy. It was thus a class struggle in which the social development and the military position were unfavourable to democratic success.

Showing also how completely the general sentiment of the time influenced the actions even of the Gracchi, whom history has always regarded as aristocrats abandoning their class pre-

judices and sacrificing their lives for the sake of justice and humanity, it is noteworthy that neither they nor their supporters, so far as is known, evinced any desire to improve the condition of the slaves, then being poured by the hundred thousand into the slave markets as a result of the Roman victories. The Gracchi recognised the harmful effect of the expansion of Roman domination, and the overthrow of Carthage, upon the well-being of their clients by their extrusion from the soil in favour of the great land and slave owners. But they did not enter upon a campaign against the slave system itself. That field lay beyond their scheme of class emancipation and political enfranchisement. It was, indeed, under the Republic that slavery reached its highest point of development and cruelty. Cicero, the vehement champion of the most odious oligarchic tyranny against the citizens, when denouncing Verres for his malefactions in Sicily, urged as a serious charge against him that he had *not* caused a slave to be crucified for a very minor offence! The Gracchi, the forerunners of Clodius, Catiline and Cæsar, made no stand against the prevailing barbarity towards captives sold into slavery. They only attempted to democratise institutions for their free clients.

It is particularly remarkable that, during the whole of this period of the constant rise of slavery as an economic and social force, the labour of free men still held a certain position in competition with that of slaves, a position which became stronger rather than weaker as time went on. Slavery was the backbone of the Roman Republic as it was of the Carthaginian State. Yet in Rome, as in Carthage, the work of freemen went on side by side with the labour of slaves; and the Carthaginians, strange to say, at the period of their most desperate struggle with Rome, encouraged free settlement on the soil more than the Romans did.

The question of the profitable or unprofitable nature of slave cultivation or slave production for commercial purposes, as at Alexandria and other manufacturing centres, would, therefore, seem to be dependent on the following considerations:—

1. The cheap cost of the slaves originally by purchase of captives in war.

2. The possibility of their cheap replacement by further purchase of captives.

3. Similar possibility of cheap reproduction by breeding.

4. Their organisation according to the best methods (*a*) of cultivation on the land, (*b*) of production in the cities.

5. Alternation of work on land for food production during the open months and on manufacture of articles of primal utility in slave workshops during the winter.

6. Cost of their keep and superintendence.

Throughout, the most important factor, assuming the best possible arrangements to be made in other respects, was the certitude of the acquisition of cheap, capable slave labour by purchase, due to the superabundance of captives owing to successful wars of conquest. So much was this the case in the flourishing days of Rome as a slave power, that it has been suggested that the crushing defeat of Varus and his legions in the forests of Germany, and the failure of Rome thereafter to suppress the German tribes or to discover any great fresh recruiting ground for forcible enslavement, was the first manifest step in the decadence of the main economic and social prop of Roman greatness. However this may be, even the magnificence of Rome in its palmy days and the marvellous development of her organised vampirism were but stupendous superstructions erected upon a very unstable and treacherous economic foundation.

But in the life of Rome itself, and indeed throughout the conquered territories, the free labourers and artisans formed combinations, trade unions and "colleges" which were able in some degree to uphold the status of those who belonged to them during the height of the slave period. These combinations of free citizens, strengthened and buttressed, as it were, by the freed men rising from the slave class and the free servants of the Republic and Empire—who, though not in any way connected with them, constituted an independent body—were at times looked upon as dangerous, even in the days of the emperors. This appears, not only from general observation but also from the remarks of so capable and wide-minded a ruler as Trajan, in his letter to Pliny on the organisation of a very small group of artisans in the capital of Bithynia. There was thus an intermediate body of free workers, outside the subsidised and freely fed Roman plebs and the slaves in the great city itself, as well as in the other cities of the Republic and Empire, which

remained in existence and gradually increased in numbers and power, preparing the way quite unconsciously through the centuries for other forms of class relations. The coloni, also, who were mostly settlers on the land from the army in Italy and elsewhere, did not give way entirely to the slave cultivation, with its accompanying usury and economic expropriation or enslavement of the small proprietors. They too fought what was in their case a desperately uphill fight against the prevailing economic system, whose full social effect was not observed until many generations later.

But the ideas of slavery dominated every class of society in public, as its influence insidiously corrupted private life. Thus labour in any shape on the land or in crafts, which had formed the groundwork and had created the strength of Rome in its early days, fell into disrepute, and was regarded as a degrading occupation for citizens and free men. This conception spread from tribute-supported and luxury-debased Rome to the provinces, which had been plundered by conquest and drained by taxation. Such a rush of ill-gotten wealth had never flowed into any great city as that which poured upon Rome after the successful campaigns against Mithridates, Carthage, Egypt, Gaul, Greece and Spain. The basin of the Mediterranean and the whole civilised world then known lay at the mercy of this huge octopus of exploiters and usurers. For from the standpoint of human industry and social well-being such was the city of the oligarchic Roman Republic in its palmy days. Economically speaking, the city gave nothing to the world. There was not even a pretence of economic return for tribute extorted and taxation levied. Following in the wake of the conquering Roman armies went a mass of speculators, usurers, land appropriators, slave-buyers, who absorbed by money dealings such booty and wealth as the soldiery had left. They were still more hated, and were the cause of more revolts than the legionaries themselves.

## CHAPTER IX

## SLAVE REVOLTS

During the whole of the early period of Roman slavery the Romans, like the Greeks and the Carthaginians, lived in constant fear of the uprising of their slaves. It was this perpetual dread which inspired the cruelty with which they were treated in times of peace, and the terrible punishments inflicted upon them when they failed in war. The disproportion in numbers between the slaves and the Roman citizens increased this feeling of suppressed panic when, during the whole period of Rome's great advance in power and her perpetual conquests, slaves, like other wealth, were poured in upon the Republic from all quarters, and were distributed in all the previously conquered provinces. It is tolerably certain, if we are to judge by the manner in which the histories of the great revolts were eviscerated and the official records suppressed, that organised risings on a smaller scale, and the destruction of separate masters who distinguished themselves for their inhumanity, with their families, were much more common than is generally admitted by Roman writers. The law or custom that all the slaves belonging to an owner who had been killed by one of them should be put to death, and the entire legislation enacted to strike terror into slaves and even freed men, showed that the dominant class had no doubt as to the possibility of sudden outbursts, accompanied by indiscriminate massacre, which lay all round them. By a careful selection in the appointment of the slaves, so that no large bodies of men coming originally from the same districts might be gathered together, by a constant use of spies when any organised disaffection was anticipated, by the prevention ordinarily of any access to supplies of arms, and by the prompt imprisonment or removal of slaves who showed exceptional vigour or initiative, slave-owners as a class were able to lessen the likelihood of effective combinations for the purpose of attack.

But, above all, use and custom could as a rule be relied upon to uphold the existing system when once it had been set on foot. With the Romans, as with the Greeks and every people among whom slavery had become the prevailing form of labour, making all other forms seem more or less degraded, slaves became imbued with the ideas of their masters. In modern times we observe precisely the same phenomenon. Wage slavery is obviously only chattel slavery in disguise, and the wage slaves form the great majority of the population in most highly civilised countries. Yet they usually accept this permanent subjugation as inevitable, are ready to believe that the position they have inherited is quite as it should be, and follow the economic teachings dictated by their employers as revelations of inspired truth. Having thus become hypnotised by use and custom, it was no easy matter to move Roman slaves to any serious action in their own interest. In the great towns, where a successful blow would have been most effective, the slave-owners were so well organised, and so perpetually on the alert, that preparation for a combined attack by their chattels was extremely difficult, without their getting wind of it and being able to gather together police and soldiery to crush it. In the country the distances from one possible rallying point to another, the lack of arms, and, in spite of the contentions of some writers, the inefficiency of such slave-organisations as may have existed to ensure permanent cohesion, rendered anything like the formation of an army capable of holding its own against Roman legions apparently impossible.

So that the acceptance of servitude and the apathy of the slaves themselves about their social condition, as well as the natural obstacles which stood in the way of vigorous and organised endeavour, made any successful upheaval of the masses of the servile population almost beyond their reach. If a really favourable opportunity came, and men of almost superhuman courage and genius rose up as leaders of the oppressed classes, jealousy, bribery, treachery *and the want of any definite policy of social reconstruction* nearly always made their success only temporary. Thus in Greece when the slaves of the Laurium silver mines, the men who were condemned to life-long suffering and death under merciless contractors, attained their freedom by a successful insurrection at the crisis

of the Peloponnesian War to the immense injury of Athens: when in the island of Chios the slaves, under Drimakos, gained the mastery and dominated their owners, nothing definite was achieved for the slaves or their successors. At Chios Drimakos, their leader, was driven to death by the very same people whom he had helped to emancipate. Only in Tyre did the slaves win outright; and, having slaughtered their oppressors, they took possession of the city. They held it until their descendants, after a magnificent resistance, were butchered by Alexander the Great. But during the interval they effected no genuine social revolution; they simply carried on the system which had been established by their Phœnician masters, taking their place and enslaving their former oppressors.

All this, however, enables us to appreciate more fully the tremendous fights of the slaves of Spain under the leadership of Viriathus in Sicily, under Eunus, Achœus and Cleon, and later under Athenion, and, lastly, in Italy under the splendid generalship of Spartacus. In every case Rome triumphed in the end. But Eunus, a native of Syria, with his two generals, held his own against the Roman forces for seventeen years, giving himself all the importance of a king. The cause of the insurrection was, as usual, the frightful cruelty with which the slaves, brought to Sicily from all the territories recently conquered, were worked to death in the mines and on the land. It was a long war of massacre on both sides.

If Eunus, instead of surrounding himself with pomp and luxury, had spent his time, together with his experienced officers, in thoroughly training new armies and getting sound civilian government on foot, could he have established Sicily, with its great resources, as an independent republic? Probably not, seeing that Rome was then in full march towards world-wide supremacy. But since he did not take the means to ensure the possibility of permanent rule, and went off into wonder-working and Asiatic mysteries, it is evident that he never saw his way clearly out of the struggle. This again proves that, neither his generals nor anybody else having been able to supplant his theocratic incapacity, after ten years of almost unchallenged supremacy in the island, the slaves, with all their numbers and success, had no real perception of what they themselves desired to achieve.

It is a part of the irony of the whole situation that Piso, the Roman democrat, who completely defeated Eunus' armies and captured Eunus himself, was as unmerciful to the vanquished slaves as the most reactionary aristocrat of them all. Wholesale crucifixions of thousands of slaves, and the condemnation of the remainder to more relentless slave-driving than ever, were the outcome of this serious and lengthy insurrection, begun at a time when Rome had plenty of difficulties on her hands from every quarter. Incidentally it may be noted that modern writers on the great struggle between Rome and Carthage nearly always show favour to the former power; giving the idea that Carthaginians were more ferocious and ruthless than their successful enemies in the treatment of their slaves and their colonists. It is, however, difficult to imagine anything more horrible than the treatment by the Romans of the peoples who, defending their own countries, were defeated in battle; nor could the punishments inflicted on the slaves in the great servile revolt in Carthage have exceeded the atrocities committed by Roman generals on defeated slaves in the course of two or three centuries.

The popularity of the gladiatorial displays, not only in Rome itself but in all the chief cities of the Empire, was a form of blood-lust and butchery to which, so far as we know, the Carthaginians were not addicted. Nothing could be more frightful than the scenes of the arena when, apart from fights to the death between the gladiators, who at least had a remote chance of survival, unarmed men, women and children captives were thrown into the great circuses to be devoured by wild beasts. Moreover, the noblest Romans, aristocrats regarded as the highest type of humane men in regard to their own fellow-citizens and their allies, were so entirely the creatures of their day and generation that even Titus and Trajan were unable to emancipate themselves from the horrors of the prevailing system. The former pursued the familiar practice of crucifying prisoners by the thousand, and selling thousands more into slavery after the capture of Jerusalem; the latter, whose goodness passed into a proverb for generations after his death, was remarkable for his encouragement of gladiatorial exhibitions on a vast scale for the delectation of his people. Of the two, then, it appears that the Semitic aristocrats and plutocratic merchants and

slave-owners of Carthage were less cold-blooded in their ruthlessness than the Aryans of the Italian peninsula, and those whom they absorbed into their growing republic and empire. It makes very little difference.

But the immensity of the Roman Empire, its magnificent public works, its great jurisprudence based upon the strictest rights of property, its fine literature, which has been drilled into successive generations of our well-to-do and relatively well-educated classes, its marvellous steadfastness under good and bad fortune, have together partially closed the eyes of modern Europeans to the dreadful system of world-wide extortion and infamy upon which this imposing superstructure was based. Not only so, but the effect of slavery in corrupting the whole moral sense of the highest among the Romans is overlooked. While, for example, we admire the forensic and political oratory as well as the philosophy of Cicero, who may fairly be considered as the founder of our somewhat verbose modern style, alike of eloquence and of writing, we are apt to forget that this vehement champion of the reactionary aristocracy of Rome itself not only advocated the most diabolical cruelty towards the slaves, but often, it may almost be said habitually, caused his political opponents to be executed without trial, and even without any formal accusation. Among other misdeeds, he strangled Catiline in prison with his own hands, fearing the consequences of an open trial. But in the end he received his reward.

What is true of Cicero is true also of most of the leading men of the Republic. Cæsar, who professed and to some extent practised democratic opinions about the Roman populace, who was murdered by the ferocious aristocratic usurer Brutus and his hired cut-throats, who was the most formidable enemy of "the old families" since Caius Gracchus, who also was the real founder of the Empire which did something to curb the power of that merciless oligarchy—Cæsar himself, merely as a matter of political business, and as a step to supreme power, devastated a great part of Gaul, slaughtered the inhabitants wholesale, and is estimated to have sold not fewer than a million Gallic captives into slavery. The Romans, that is to say, possessed the most powerful and ruthless social machine for the extension of human oppression that had ever been seen.

Their military system was persistently used to plunder, butcher and enslave less perfectly organised populations, and their financial greed and impersonal money power stepped in to complete the ruin wrought by their arms. So completely, likewise, did the Roman governing classes of all shades of opinion believe in Rome's manifest destiny to crush the proud, and spare, after her ruthless fashion, the vanquished, that it was quite impossible for them to think of foreign affairs or general administration except in terms of conquest, rapine, slave-selling and usury, followed by considerations as to the most effective means of extracting perpetual tribute. None escaped from this foul influence.

When nearly the whole of the provinces of the Republic were in revolt against almost the last stage of this tremendous advance in world-wide domination, the great servile insurrection in Italy under Spartacus occurred. Never could there have been a better opportunity for such an upheaval. In east and west alike the Roman armies were fully occupied. The result of the fresh struggle against Mithridates hung in the balance. The war in Spain looked doubtful. Italians of the south who had suffered terribly in the so-called "social war" were greatly disaffected and ready if not to aid, at least to refrain from obstructing, a rising that might incidentally help them. In Rome itself the class wars and bloody faction fights were never more threatening. The recent arrival of large bodies of slaves from powerful and warlike tribes provided the numbers and the vigour needed to furnish a fine slave army, if only arms could be obtained. Beginning with two hundred slaves and a trifling success, arms were obtained by attack on a convoy, and Spartacus, the Thracian gladiator, took the leadership of the revolt, and showed himself, from first to last, a man of military genius and of great political foresight. No ordinary general could have created a powerful, well-disciplined and adequately supplied army of at least a hundred thousand men out of untrained slaves of different nationalities, speaking various tongues. Hannibal himself performed no greater feat. Nine successive victories over the best Roman generals then available for home service showed the Romans what sort of genius they had to contend against, and made them fear that Spartacus might be completely successful and capture Rome itself. But the slave

commander was too wise to attempt such a dangerous siege. Where the famous Carthaginian hesitated he too held back. If jealousies had not arisen, and the familiar weapons of bribery and treachery had not been used, or if he had succeeded in getting to Sicily, he and his men could perhaps have continued the war which he had carried on for four years and a half on the mainland, releasing slaves, freeing prisoners and relieving debtors in every direction.

But it seems certain that Spartacus felt from the first that his magnificent effort was doomed to failure, unless he could induce his troops to withdraw from Italy to some district where he could make reasonably sure of continuous support. He himself looked to Thrace, and only when a march thither was rendered impossible by the ardour of his soldiers for loot did he try to embark his army for Sicily. But throughout Spartacus, the greatest leader the proletariat ever had, kept his head. He neither set up his kingship like Eunus and Athenion, nor neglected the discipline of his forces like Viriathus. There is every reason to believe that so far as possible he was merciful to the armies he defeated and to the people of the towns and cities where he quartered his men : a policy which was not only humane but advantageous. At length, by no fault of his own, he was defeated in a decisive battle by a great concentration of the Roman armies which had been brought in from a distance. He died fighting in the field. The usual results followed. Many thousands of slaves were crucified along the Roman roads, impalement and other Asiatic tortures being also resorted to. The rest became slaves again.

Thus this, by far the most extensive and best-organised slave insurrection of antiquity, broke down. Unlike the Romans, Spartacus had no definite centre and no recognised social system. He desired, not to constitute in Italy a rival republic to Rome, but to return to his native Thrace; and this, as all historians agree, shows conclusively that he believed the slaves by themselves had little chance of eventual success within the area where he won his amazing victories. And that was the truth. Courage, sagacity, initiative, statesmanship, noble qualities of every kind, were powerless finally to make head against the vampire growth which he had to encounter in the days of its apparently inevitable expansion. The time was not

yet; and force by itself was not sufficient to push forward the evolution of human society into the next stage of its still unconscious development. The insurrection headed by Spartacus, with all the reputation gained by his early victories and admirable judgment, could not overthrow Roman domination, even in a period of serious crisis at home and abroad. Therefore we must conclude that such risings, justifiable as they were, and useful as they might be in urging on the enactment of palliatives of slavery and in keeping alive the spirit of the dominated class, were entirely futile as practical efforts to obtain premature emancipation. The two essential elements of triumphant social revolution were both wanting: the economic and social evolution was not ready for the transformation: the class striving for emancipation was not yet able to comprehend and control its own surroundings.

From this time onwards, therefore, through the entire period of the Empire, slavery remained the deciding factor in the economic and social field. Free farmers struggled with varying fortune against slave-worked properties in the country; free artisans with their "colleges" were in competition with the trained slaves in the city; the coloni, who were the economic and social ancestors of the serfs, held a position midway between the free peasant farmers, who had plenty of troubles of their own, and the slaves. There is never a period when one element of method of production completely overwhelms or supplants the others. Even Egypt, with its constant supply of slaves from without, in its greatest period of prosperity saw small proprietors still carrying on their hereditary business. But slavery once introduced, all the class antagonisms above had little or no interest for the slaves themselves, either before or after the great Spartacus rising.

From the very first, the inflexible courage and determination of the free legionaries who at last fought down the power of Carthage brought about their own ruin, in the very surroundings of the city for whose welfare, as they believed, they had striven. By the exquisite irony of economic history, as we have seen, the slaves and the wealth which the peasant soldiery secured for Rome were the agents which assured, in the long run, their own expropriation and poverty. Their losses on the field of battle terribly depleted the ranks of the free yeomen, leaving them with

less force to encounter their enemies at home; while their victories strengthened the aristocrats and rich plebeians in their social and political campaign against the rights of their fellow-citizens. The slaves from abroad, beaten on the field of battle, avenged themselves with all their sufferings on the field of production. Given the existing conditions, the immediate results were inevitable. Everything combined to enable the great landowners, more especially in Italy, to defeat the upholders of the old system with its equitable distribution of the public land. Aristocrats with land slaves and money steadily overcame freemen farmers with land but with no resources.

Slavery, particularly on pasture lands with cattle, was remunerative. Pasturage, given a market not too remote for the advantageous disposal of the products, relatively yielded more return to the land and slave owner than arable cultivation, for the number of slaves employed. This has been seen frequently in agricultural history, notably in our own country during the reign of Henry VII. and in the nineteenth century. There are those who contend that, owing to the numerous drawbacks attendant upon it, such as the carelessness or actual disinclination of the slaves in relation to their work, the cost of supervision, the gaps in the application of their labour on the land, and the losses due to escapes and disease, slavery must under all circumstances succumb to free labour. But the fact remains that the enormous accumulation of riches for those times in Egypt, the Grecian States, in Asia Minor and the East generally had all been piled up by slave hands. It could have come from no other source. If the Romans failed to produce similar results from the employment of the slaves, this must have been due to faulty management—not, certainly, to any humane scruples as to the treatment of their slaves. Moreover, when, as on well-managed estates, slaves who had little to do during winter were employed industrially on spinning, weaving, and handling metals in the slave work-prisons called ergastulæ, one source of leakage was at once stopped, to the benefit of the owners. In the city also trained slaves, whether for direct employment by their owners or for letting out to contractors, were valuable property, as was proved by the sums paid for the lease of such slaves by their hirers in various departments, alike in Greece,

in Rome and in the Roman provinces. Slaves, indeed, worked side by side with free labourers on public works and elsewhere, which seems to prove that they showed no great inferiority.

Again, it is certain that slave labour, even in modern times, built up large fortunes in the Southern States of America as well as in the West Indies. There is, in fact, no absolute rule in the matter beyond this: while slaves were cheap and plentiful and supervision easy, slave labour was more remunerative. But when the slave markets grew empty, and these human chattels became more scarce and dear, the economic balance, as we shall see, swung the other way. Yet a born slave-driver and extorter of the last ounce of personal gain out of everything he touched, such as Cato the Censor, would never have employed slaves unless they had returned him something very handsome per head. That it was purely a matter of money with him was shown by the fact that he recommended all his fellow slave-owners to sell or get rid of the old slaves that were past work—a cynical recommendation which seems to have shocked decent Romans of the period. (They appear to have felt a personal responsibility for their decrepit and worn-out chattel slaves which the employers of wage slaves do not generally feel.)

What the effect of the slave system was upon the slave-owning and slave-employing class while slavery was the controlling labour form has often been described, and does not affect its economic significance. That it was in every way morally degrading, from the great gladiatorial conflicts in the arena to similar murderous displays at private entertainments, from the horde of parasites who swarmed round the Imperial Court and cumbered the palaces of the very rich, is found recorded in all the descriptions of the time. But cruelty, blood-lust, excess, ostentation, extravagance, vice and wholesale debauchery had no direct influence in destroying slavery as an institution. Ethics have little or no effect on the course of human development. Not Rome alone but all the great slave empires of antiquity are convincing evidence of this. The question to be decided in the long centuries of Imperial domination was, could the free labourers and farmers, artisans and freed men who stood between the slave-owners and the plebs—that body of gratuitously fed poor citizens which only existed in Rome—hold their

own in the future against their servile rivals? Combinations of free citizens, buttressed and strengthened by the freed men rising from the slave class, as well as by the large numbers of free official servants of the Republic and Empire in the lower grades, helped the artisans in this silent conflict. We know that they were even regarded as a danger on this account not only from general remarks upon their growth and importance, but from the observations of so capable and wide-minded a ruler as Trajan. In one of his letters to Pliny, as we have seen, he speaks with strong prejudice against a very small group of citizens in the capital of Bithynia, who had organised themselves for some sort of joint economic protection.

It is remarkable that under the Empire the slaves themselves rarely made any organised effort against their oppressors. But at various periods we hear of what we should now call anarchistic outbreaks, which could scarcely have been carried out apart from their connivance. The great incendiary attempt to burn down Rome under Nero was attributed to the Christians; and as many of the slaves were members of that faith the imputation may not be wholly groundless, while the same can be said of similar proceedings in other cities. Three times the palace of Diocletian was burnt over his head. And the Christians, who repudiated any share of their co-religionists in the Roman conflagration, have never been at any pains to deny that this wholesale arson committed at the expense of their persecutor, Diocletian, was quite possibly carried out by persons of their own creed. But anarchy had as little effect in upsetting slavery as it had in intimidating the Emperors. Such mitigations in the lot of the slaves as were introduced were certainly not due to the terror inspired by their risings; nor did the teachings of the Church prevail until the time when the stream of economic progress set strongly towards emancipation. Here, as in other cases, economics, speaking generally, ordain the course of improvement; ethics approve what economics have rendered inevitable or advisable; religion winds up by blessing results manifestly about to be achieved or already attained.

From first to last the economic and financial condition of Imperial Rome was in a state of unstable equilibrium. Even during the period of the generally peaceful and successful rule of Trajan, Hadrian and the Antonines, financial troubles at the

centre were by no means uncommon, and the people and slaves suffered below when all seemed secure at the top. Later, even during the fortunate Imperial career of Diocletian, there was no permanent security. Neither peace nor well-meant measures for social improvement could breathe new life into a system which was decaying at its base. It was not the presumed unproductive character of slave labour, with all its admitted drawbacks, which was the cause of this continuous trouble. It was the fact that, all the time, the great Imperial metropolis, Rome herself, was continually absorbing wealth from without and making no commercial return, luxuriating in unproductive and extravagant expenditure of every kind, regardless of the future. The metropolis was peopled to a large extent by citizens who made no pretence of working for their own or the general benefit. They were dependent, even for the necessaries of life, upon sea-borne supplies from without gratuitously distributed. To such a pitch of economic stress had matters been brought that, just when the Empire was immensely powerful in the field—capable even of retrieving such a terrible disaster as that which befell Diocletian's associate-emperor Galerius—the mischiefs of the whole financial, fiscal and monetary system were felt more acutely than ever.

While the economic and social situation was thus threatening, and war was being waged on the frontiers and in Britain, a very formidable insurrection of the slave peasantry broke out in Gaul. These unfortunate people, the Bagaudæ, were suffering from every conceivable form of oppression and robbery. They were chattel slaves in all but name of the local landowners of the same race as themselves. They were also at the mercy of Imperial tax-gatherers, and the military anarchy which devastated Gaul put an end to any security for property or life. At last, driven to despair, these unfortunate peasants rose in insurrection all over the province. There is no full account of their campaign against their oppressors, but it is at least certain that at the commencement of their upheaval they were fully successful against their immediate landowners and tyrants, and that the Bagaudæ became for the time being masters of rural Gaul.

This was not surprising. Notwithstanding the success in arms of the joint Emperors, discontent was rife everywhere.

Roman prestige had been much shaken, and the influence of the great Imperial capital over the provinces had been continually sapped by the habitual absence of the Emperor himself from the metropolis and the declining power of the Senate. If ever in Roman history there was a time when the slave class, thoroughly organised, *could* possibly have succeeded in putting forward the hour of the day which the sun recorded on the dial of human progress, this was the moment for such an attempt on their part. The campaigns of Eunus, Spartacus and Viriathus had been carried on under circumstances which, as we can now see, on looking back at them, rendered permanent victory quite impossible. Rome was then a great rising power. Her prodigious force was based upon the patriotic determination and courage of her free citizen farmers who were beguiled into the idea that they were fighting for their own well-being against enemies abroad and enemies at home. Even if the great slave leaders had won final and not temporary success, they themselves could have done no more than establish the same slavery with a new face, the slaves being the masters and the masters the slaves. No other issue of the struggle could be. The social evolution would have gone on as before; slavery would still have been the economic foundation of the whole social structure.

But now the situation was different. The class in revolt had apparently some genuine chance of obtaining economic and social freedom. Not only had slavery passed its highest point, the central administration had been split up and was much weaker in consequence; even the great mercenary legions were widely distributed, while the high price of food favoured production and payment in kind. But the class to be freed by this slave peasant revolt was not yet ready for emancipation, was not organised enough to administrate its own affairs or to conquer even local political power; and was not sufficiently educated to understand the difficulties to be met. Also it wholly lacked the military discipline which had distinguished the newly captured slaves under Spartacus. So, when they encountered the Imperial legions which were rushed into Gaul, they fell to pieces and underwent the fate of all insurrectionists who bravely and legitimately anticipate their epoch. They had only won temporary revenge, like their followers in the

valley of misery more than a thousand years afterwards, upon the nobles who outraged them.

But the Bagaudæ had earlier successes than the Jacquerie of the fourteenth century. Within a century and a half of this unfortunate failure in A.D. 297, their children and grandchildren, undeterred by the defeat of their forbears, constituted so formidable a combination under the same name that a large part of Gaul, and a still larger part of Spain, fell for a short time under the control of the peasants. The Roman Government itself had become so hateful in every way, with its excessive taxes and proscriptions and terrible atrocities, that the whole country was in a continuous state of revolt; and the invasions and attacks of barbarian tribes were preferred to the civilised and systematic outrages of decadent Rome.' In short, the economic and social breakdown of chattel slavery and centralised taxation and rapine by a nominal government would have compelled the introduction of some fresh organisation, even if the hordes of the frontiers had never entered the Roman dominions.

## CHAPTER X

## SLAVERY IN DECLINE (1)

The rise of Rome as the great slave power of the Western world was slow; and, in view of the apparently insuperable difficulties encountered and overcome, it seems extraordinary to us to-day. High-water mark in this slavery was reached at the end of the Republic and under the rule of the first Emperors. Yet, as already observed, slavery was the chief but not the only element of production in the Empire, even at its highest point. Small ownership of land, especially in the provinces, artisanship in the cities, such as Alexandria and Corinth and Rome itself, were carried on side by side with slave cultivation and slave production of certain classes of goods. It is impossible to say of slavery as an institution, either in Rome and Italy, or in the great provinces: here it was that the decay of slavery began. In the great public works the contracts were taken by employers, some of whom employed slaves, some free men who toiled for wages—some both at the same time. Large slave-owners in Rome as in Greece let out their slaves to others who then used them to work in their interest in mines and elsewhere, though free labourers were also engaged and were paid wages for similar work.

Thus there were always workers in the various departments of industry whom, given a chance in economic conditions of slave labour, it might be more profitable to employ than the slaves themselves. This was especially the case in very highly skilled craftsmanship, where it was difficult to train the slaves, who, as a rule, had no direct interest in the exercise of their skill, and still more difficult to induce them to give the careful attention needed for artistic success in this sort of work. Also certain kinds of large properties, at a distance from the markets, on which elaborate superintendence was called for, could not permanently hold their own in arable culture against small farmers or agricultural workers such as the coloni, who tilled

primarily for the support of themselves and their families. The cost of transport, to be referred to hereafter, told heavily against slave labour, even when in the dull winter season the slaves were forced to provide articles of use for their masters or, in case of surplus, for sale, by toiling at trades in the slave workshops which were maintained on the land. Only for pasturage could slaves be used permanently to advantage in tending the flocks and herds: an economic fact that helped to extend the latifundia, great slave-worked estates, which had far more effect in Italy than in the provinces. These, as we have seen, increased greatly, much to the detriment of the yeomen and small farmers, towards the end of the Republic.

War was the "great industry" of Rome. So long as rich countries, with vast accumulations from the slave labour of old, lay open to the Roman legions, this highly organised industry was immensely profitable. The masses of treasure seized, first in Italy, then brought to Rome from Carthage, Greece, Pontus, Egypt, Sicily, Spain, and even Gaul, were accompanied by hundreds of thousands of educated, intelligent and civilised slaves. These two sources of realised and realisable wealth were exhausted when the era of great conquests was overpast. Money could not be squeezed out of the barbarians and semi-barbarians on the frontier; slaves could no longer be captured who were worth much more than their keep. Moreover, Rome was essentially a market with only one end to it. As there was no production to be given in exchange for the luxuries imported from without, either by sea, or by the special posts organised for land transport, the spoils of the conquered countries in precious metals were inevitably paid away, for those playthings of the rich, to the merchants of those provinces whence the gold and silver had originally come. In this way a return was obtained even of the heavy tributes extorted under the Empire.

The colossal extravagance of the emperors and of private persons, as described by Roman historians, created a perpetual monetary crisis in Rome itself. The cost of the maintenance of the free Roman proletariat, who were fed out of the public granaries because they had votes, intensified the difficulty. Although taxes were exacted with the greatest rigour, it was at last impossible to obtain payment in cash. By degrees, that is to say, the treasure robbed abroad had been drained out of

Rome again to the conquered provinces. Unprofitable expenditure on huge circuses, temples, aqueducts, baths, etc., only made matters worse. But this specially applied to Italy and the Empire in the West. The East suffered much less from this purely financial trouble because its commerce with Rome called for cash payments. Thus, quite slowly, Rome prepared for her own decay and the downfall of the economic basis of her domination by the very expansion of the system through which she rose to greatness. For slavery, though inevitable and indispensable in the cruel upward progress of mankind, proved in the long run not the best method of employing labour in production. The slave in agriculture, as in manufacture, was an animated tool educated to perform a mechanical toil. Mortality among slaves was very heavy; they not infrequently escaped when opportunity afforded. It is calculated that, when employing the same means of production, slaves only produced a fraction of the return which intelligent free workers would obtain by arable tillage from the same soil. While slave labour was cheap this did not matter; just as, in our own day, primitive labour-wasting machinery is often used where wages are low and many hands can be employed. But when labour is dear better machinery and the more skilled work of few hands take its place.

The vast spoils which these free peasants, by their valour, poured into the laps of their patrician nobility hastened on their own ruin. That was the stage of successful slavery. The public land in the conquered territories was seized by the patricians and worked by the captives.

But the conquerors were conquered also by the arts, culture, manufactures, luxury and vices of their defeated enemies. The West overcame the East by arms, the East vanquished the West by intelligence and debauchery. The same with the slaves. The low standard of humanity inculcated towards them fostered cruelty and brutality all round. Their employment in agriculture slackened the rate of mechanical progress, while their vices of flattery and treachery affected the moral of their masters. Constant fear of spying weakened the privacy of the home. Slavery, therefore, in its prime held within itself all the elements of its own ruin—economic, social, ethical. But the former was, throughout, the chief cause of breakdown as of

success. While slavery was supreme, the most advanced free cultivator was afraid to expend any savings upon better tools from Gaul, for fear of some nefarious devices of the great slave-owners to bring about his expropriation, or to seize him as a slave himself, unless he fled from his holding. When slavery was gradually decaying, agricultural progress was arrested by the rapine of the slaves themselves, whose masters, being unable to keep them properly, encouraged them to prey upon their neighbours. In this way the natural conservatism of the peasant farmer or the free colonist, who paid in produce for the right to cultivate his holding, was strengthened. Also throughout the period of Roman dominance there was no great accumulation of capital which could be used in the processes of production by employing the unpaid labour of propertyless proletarians for the purpose of making profit.

Capital in antiquity and during the Roman Empire was obviously quite different from capital to-day. It was mainly concerned with commerce—with making a profit out of the produce of others. It did not, as capital, concern itself with the processes of production. Those processes were small and very inefficient as compared with our methods of to-day. Moreover, they remained almost stationary for very many centuries. Production was still chiefly for direct use; and the free producers in town and country still remained in control of their own tools and were mainly masters of their own products. The slaves were owned, their product was owned, the land and tools were owned by the slave-owners. But such capital as he employed, small enough in any case, was not devoted to production for exchange. The slave-owner did not buy his slaves and raw material for gold to make profit. He did not employ them at machines, which in effect commanded them, and then at once, or as soon as he could contrive to do so, sell their product for more gold. That was not the rule at all.

So it was likewise in the mining industry. There, undoubtedly, the object was to make profit out of working the slaves to death, when more of these animated tools could easily be procured at a cheap rate; or by the judicious exploitation of hired slaves, who had to be replaced by the contractor if they died at their work, or a heavy compensation paid for their premature decease. This also applied to free labourers who

received salaries for similar laborious toil. But even in this case, where gold, silver, or copper, or iron was dug out of the earth, the mineral thus extracted performed none of the functions of highly developed capitalism such as we see around us. It is quite impossible to found economic arguments about the past upon what we observe in the totally different system of the present. Capital as the dominant economic and social force producing articles for exchange and for exchange alone, by employing free labourers who have no option but to work for wages, never appeared as a settled form of industry in ancient times. It is essentially modern; and could not have manifested itself in its present shape until the social and economic conditions in which it could operate had been historically prepared.

Therefore, to compare capital, in the sense in which it is economically and scientifically used now, with capital as it was used in past ages, even when taking full account of credit and banking as then developed, is entirely to misapprehend the whole course of the economic evolution. As it was, when slavery began to decline and monetary wealth disappeared from the Western Empire, the owners of large properties found themselves without the moderate amount of capital necessary to raise the exceptionally valuable products which they had previously been accustomed to provide. The whole system had never at any time been far removed from production for personal needs. At no period did the mass of the people demand luxuries or even superfluity of necessaries. They were too poor to create any such demand. The cities controlled the country politically but never economically. Commerce, in fact, so far as Imperial Rome was concerned, consisted only in supplying the rich and their retainers with luxuries of every kind, from the emperors, their households and their armies downwards. The proletarians were fed with grain from Sicily, Egypt, Gaul, the Black Sea, etc., for all of which there was no commercial return. Imports were, in fact, tributes from the subjugated provinces, or articles for the wealthy, paid for in gold, luxuries drained from such countries as still had any stores of precious metals left. Always, during the whole period of Rome's pre-eminence, Roman wealth was wealth obtained from others and used unproductively.

Consequently, when slavery gradually ceased to dominate

as the most common form of labour, and monetary economy, simultaneously, became restricted, or impossible, owing to the lack of gold and silver as the basis of credit, there was a steady return to the ancient method of family production for use by free cultivators, who either owned their own land, or who, as said, paid the proprietors, mostly now small folk likewise, in kind for the use of the soil. These cultivators, in turn, lived simply on their family work, made no accumulations of wealth, or did so on a very small scale, and depended for the supply of such outside articles as they could not make for themselves upon the growing class of artisans in the towns. They suffered from heavy taxation taken now in produce; from oppression and fraud alike when the amount of their crops to be paid to the treasury (which stood to them for the government) was apportioned; from official demands upon their labour to keep up the highways and public works after a fashion; and from the increasing difficulties of transport as the great military roads fell into decay. So serious did this last matter become, that it was calculated that a distance of thirty miles from the centre where the agricultural produce was to be stored fully doubled its cost at market.

There was thus an apparent return all along the line to the ancient form of natural production—that is, production for use and exchange only of the surplus—which had existed before the period of great invasions and conquests transformed the bulk of Roman economy. The small cultivator or colonist might or might not have one or more slaves at his command as in old times. But slave labour was gradually ceasing to be the dominant factor in the West and still more gradually in the East. The land was the basis of the entire social structure. From it alone could the necessaries of life be directly obtained. The cities and towns were required to supplement, not to supplant, the domestic economy. There was no industrial agriculture, no production of commodities for sale on a large scale. After, as before, the supremacy of slavery, "the great mass of the population had very modest ideals, a great simplicity of life, very moderate aspirations regardless of comfort; so industry remained at a minimum, the economies of life were stable, immovable, based on the normal satisfaction of equal needs. This is the mass which impressed itself on the general social economy and

not the small minority who led a life of artificial luxury, which the most diverse imported products supplied the means for, but which did not affect in the least the local economy." As was said by Seneca, who was able to regard a slave as a man even in the days of appalling luxury under Nero: "Riches for the few means poverty for the many."

Rome in her prime was a ruthless plutocracy, systematically draining wealth from all her provinces by the farming of taxes, exploitation by credit, wholesale usury, contracts for the troops, great public works, and the sale of lands confiscated in territories where the population was dense. Rome in her decay was compelled to go back very slowly to economic arrangements similar to those whence she had emerged. There was no change in the main methods or appliances of production below. These went on for centuries upon centuries without any marked modification. That is the great and crucial difference between our own period and all previous economic history. Our methods and appliances of industrial production do not remain stationary even for a few years in succession. Transformation is continuous. Capital under these modern conditions can dispense with chattel slavery; modern wage-earners are the veritable hirelings of capital, doomed to produce surplus value for the capitalists and the possessing classes by penal servitude for life to the capitalist class. Slavery, in the ancient sense of the word, then becomes superfluous and uneconomical.

Long as was the process by which slavery was dethroned, and numerous as were the minor causes which led up to its final collapse, the chief reason for its steady and increasing enfeeblement was the decline in the importation of slaves. This was inevitable, as the area of profitable conquest was restricted by the very extension of the conquests themselves. Supplies of slaves and imported accumulations of treasure fell off simultaneously. Consequently, the number of the slaves to be bought being reduced, the price of the remainder, to those who depended upon slave labour either for production on large properties, pastoral or agricultural, or for domestic luxury or vice, increased. There were no longer tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of trained and educated men and women to be bought as slaves at Delos or other slave marts at very low prices: prices so low that the death or loss by escape of a few

slaves was a matter of small moment. There were plenty to be had cheap where the others came from, in those halcyon days of wholesale human exploitation.

But now, when slaves were scarcer, their replacement at high prices became a serious matter. It was not even profitable to neglect them, to maltreat them, or to work them to death. And at the same time that there were fewer slaves to buy, and they were more costly to purchase, money, which alone would be received in exchange for slaves, was harder and harder to come by and more valuable when obtained. Hence the scarcity of slaves and the scarcity of the precious metals both told for once in the same direction, and slaves became very costly. For the systematic breeding of slaves for sale, or to supply their loss from various causes, appears never to have been scientifically practised on a large scale in the Roman Empire. So that the slave mart depended for its supply almost exclusively upon captures in war, razzias on land, and piracy, all of which methods for procuring human cattle had been greatly reduced in efficiency. Slaves, consequently, both as a class and as individuals, became more and more valuable.

By degrees their keep also became more expensive. For, owing to the reduction of supply, the price of grain was rising in common with other articles of necessity. The famous law of the maximum formulated by the great Emperor Diocletian, whether it succeeded in producing its intended effect or not, proves conclusively that the cost of the necessaries of life had risen in the general market—whether the agricultural produce had been raised by the slaves or freemen—to a level which imperilled the economic stability of the Empire. Whatever view may be taken of that remarkable decree, which was considered so important by its author that it was recorded on stone monuments throughout the Empire, it is clear that it was intended to control the prices of necessaries of life in the interest of consumers both slave and free : to avert a serious food crisis, in short.

Our own recent experiences in Great Britain, which, like ancient Rome, is mainly dependent upon foreign sources for its wheat supply, enable us to understand, far more clearly than before, the purport of such an enactment. The cost of food rose terribly high ; therefore the calm, calculating statesman who

ruled the Roman Empire from his palace at Salona (Spalato) issued his rescript to maintain a seasonable level of prices. Manifestly, therefore, slaves in the cities, who could not produce their own keep from the land, were much more expensive to maintain than at an earlier date. This not only still further increased the permanent price of a slave, when purchased, but had its effect in decreasing his economic worth in comparison with the service of free labourers, who could be engaged to work for wages; and, *except in Rome*, were destitute of anything to fall back upon in time of privation.

Hence the growing tendency to manumission on purely economic grounds. For the slave-owner who manumitted his slaves got rid of the responsibility for their maintenance and relieved himself of the cost of their replacement. But then some manumitted slaves, unless they had been in specially advantageous positions where their *peculium* or admitted personal gains secured to them by custom had been large, found themselves in bondage to their necessities, as freed men attached to the great house, or as freemen generally, to the same extent practically as when they were slaves. In order merely to live they had to find employment. For this reason the competition between free labour and slave labour became more keen; and the balance turned in favour of free unattached workers, from the point of view of the temporary, or even the permanent, employer. The privileged proletarians, also, though despising labour as degrading to Roman citizens, were forced to work in order to earn their keep. Thus slavery, in its many ups and downs in its conflict with free labour, in town and in country, in domestic service and artisan employments, became by degrees less relatively useful.

But when slaves became less numerous, more valuable and increasingly dear to maintain, they gained in status even when not manumitted, in many cases prior to their manumission. Rich slaves who had the ear of their masters in business became more common. Public slaves who performed public duties could not be regarded permanently as much below the level of the freemen or citizens for whom they acted as State functionaries. Still less could the distinction be permanently maintained when citizens were subjected to forced labour, which, while it lasted, put them virtually on the same level as the slaves

themselves. Moreover, in the very corporations among free workers, which were kept up in order to secure their collective and personal advantages, these trade combinations had the sympathy, help, and at times the active co-operation of slaves. In this wise throughout Roman society, under the declining Empire, the free labour of coloni and peasant proprietors was displacing slave labour in the agricultural districts ; slave labour was losing ground in the towns by manumission and competition of freemen who worked for salaries. Slavery, in short, was no longer universal and indispensable.

The continued opulence of the very few, their excessive luxury, their waste, their ostentation, their costly festivities, hastened on that economic ruin which, while it increased poverty, intensified likewise the causes which told against slavery.

Simultaneously, these very economic causes, by raising the status of slaves and rendering their better treatment advisable and their mere value considerable, told in the same direction. Such comparatively small improvements as were made in cultivation called for slaves of more intelligence and education, who required less superintendence and took greater interest in their work. This was still more the case, as already observed, in town industry, where slaves could only hold their own against the growing competition of freemen and lately manumitted slaves when placed more or less on the same level of culture and self-respect. Similar considerations had their effect throughout. Thus slaves were treated with greater humanity under the Empire than under the Republic. Legislation was enacted in their favour. They began to be respected, not only in life but after death. Their families must not be broken up by sale under Marcus Aurelius. Their burial grounds were held sacred, and this although gladiatorial conflicts and other cruel practices were still maintained. General opinion grew favourable to manumission as its economic advantage became more and more apparent.

Here, too, legislation as usual followed the course of material development and helped to strengthen the position of the manumitted slaves who were allowed to obtain the rights of citizens. Thus ameliorative measures for slaves were continuous during the reigns of all the later emperors. Not that the later Empire

in itself was any more really humane in its essence than the earlier, as was shown by the fact that torture, though nominally decreased, was, in not a few cases, really extended by bringing even free citizens under this cruel system of "the question" when they were accused of treachery to the Imperial polity: a form of indictment easily stretched to embrace any sort of case. It was not sentimental sympathy with suffering, but the silent, growing pressure of economic necessity and the consequent increased influence of the slave class, which induced so stern and ruthless a man as the Emperor Hadrian to enter upon a course of amelioration, and obliged Diocletian and Galerius, the active persecutors of Christians, who were mainly slaves, to carry out the same policy. This is also true of Constantine and his successors, who, with the exception of the pagan philosopher Julian, were, at least nominally, Christians. Thus the development went on. When the movement had begun, and manumission grew common and advantageous, then the effect of the social evolution as a whole was felt in the field of morals in particular. Social relations, in fact, gave birth to a new and higher ethic, which previously met with little acceptance even among the Stoics, who took the lead in theoretical acceptance of a more elevated humanity.

Had slaves remained cheap and their labour still profitable under the old oppressive system, had the lucrative conquests of rich countries with large accumulations of the precious metals continued to pour almost inexhaustible wealth into Rome, it is little likely that her ruling class would have been able to discover that even the worst known form of chattel slavery, in the ruins and in the old ergastulæ, needed improvement. When, however, material facts produced a definite economic current in favour of improvement of slave conditions, then, undoubtedly, the higher morality thus engendered began to react upon the general conscience of the time; and owners of slaves were induced to manumit their slaves, during life, or at death, by considerations which did not so directly emanate from the economic motives that affected their own predecessors. "It would be a psychologic mistake to claim that always and in every case action is determined by the view of immediate and material utility. As men's conditions of existence change, their views, their conceptions, their opinions, their consciences change.

Ideas are transformed as the material conditions of production are transformed. Revolutionary ideas in human affairs mean that the elements of the new society are forming in the old." Institutions and laws connect with, and are by degrees forced to accommodate themselves to, the new economic and social development, though the superstructure may vary owing to the varying surroundings. Hence great social changes appear to be the conscious action of intelligent men who are working to bring about a state of society already conceived in their own minds. But these social changes are really due to the material and economic causes germinating within, when a new form of production, with its social and economic relations, is developing side by side with, and gradually replacing, an older form. But human psychologic conceptions nevertheless react upon and sometimes even anticipate the material results.

## CHAPTER XI

## SLAVERY IN DECLINE (2)

Thus, even so early as the third and fourth century of our era, slavery was gradually but certainly ceasing to be the dominant economic force in the Roman Empire. That is now clear to us. It was not appreciated at the time. Rarely in history does any ruling minority understand the stage at which it has arrived in the inevitable process of its own decay. Still more rarely does the dominated majority apprehend the real causes of its own subjection, or comprehend the level to which it has risen as the result of its wholly unconscious social development. So with slaves and slavery. The slaves revolted often and fought bravely to shake off the chains of intolerable economic, social and personal oppression. But even when they temporarily succeeded they saw no way of escape from the system which crushed, tortured and butchered them, save by putting their masters under the same dictation from which they had suffered themselves. Their revolts were in the main unsuccessful, because the time was not ripe for their emancipation. They sacrificed themselves bootlessly, in the long record of the martyrdom of man to the ignorance and cruelty of his own species, unconsciously and horribly working its way onwards and upwards to a final relief from subjection. But this development could only come centuries upon centuries later, under economic conditions which the ablest brains of all time could not anticipate; conditions which we ourselves can barely grasp even when we have the entire system functioning around us.

What, however, the most justifiable, well-organised and well-led upheavals of the slaves in Italy, Sicily, Gaul and elsewhere could not achieve, notwithstanding the courage displayed and the greatness of the gladiator Spartacus, was brought about in the course of hundreds of years by the unseen growth of economic and social forces below. Slavery was slowly eaten out, though

not only serfdom, its successor, but actual slavery itself, has survived, even in Europe, to modern times. The economic causes of decay and downfall were constantly at work, while the Empire still maintained an aspect of grandeur and permanence which deluded even the invaders who were compassing its final destruction.

The causes of the decay and downfall of Roman slavery may then be thus summed up in brief:

1. The cessation of the large supply of slaves by conquest which had filled the slave marts with *civilised* slaves in the successful wars of the Republic and the early Empire.

2. The increased cost of high-class slaves owing to their scarcity.

3. The falling off in the acquisition of treasure from without, when Rome had overrun and pillaged the principal wealth-accumulating slave countries of antiquity, thus gradually depleting the cash needed for payment of slaves and other luxuries.

4. The increased cost of the keep of slaves, due to higher prices of cereals.

5. Manumission of slaves owing to these economic causes and the rising status of slaves under the late Empire.

6. Free labourers increasing and becoming economically more effective as (*a*) cultivators on the soil, (*b*) artisans in the towns.

7. The scarcity of precious metals destroying the monetary economy.

8. The consequent return to natural and family economy on the land by free farmers and free coloni, the latter being the forerunners of the serfs. These farmers on participation in product were in all senses free, when their dues were paid to the proprietors, and their services had been performed for the State.

9. The enormous cost of transport which increased as roads fell into disrepair and rendered production by slaves of luxuries for sale more and more unprofitable.

Simultaneously with this enfeeblement and decay of the slave system the whole economic arrangements of the Empire were undergoing a slow but relentless process of change. On the one hand, the scarcity of money increased the power of those who possessed it; and thus, more especially in relation to land, enhanced the crushing weight of mortgages and put the debtor at the mercy of the creditor, while the value of the land was

diminished. On the other hand, this very scarcity of money forced the return to small cultivation and rendered inevitable, as we have seen, payment in kind. Produce by degrees replaced money for all purposes of payment. Taxes in kind. Tributes in kind. Landlords' dues in kind. Land tax in kind. Salaries in kind. General payments in kind. And while all this was going on organisation was deteriorating, and roads were becoming steadily worse. The flourishing Rome of the Republic and early Empire was falling into a ruinous state. The East was gaining ground upon the West, and the removal of the capital of the Empire by Constantine was only a more complete announcement of the policy of neglect of Rome, which had been pursued by his predecessors; while the civil wars for personal dominance served to deepen still further the increasing poverty of the State. Slavery was by no means dead; there was wealth still in the Eastern Empire; but a completely new social organisation was growing up out of the downfall of the old, when the succession of barbarian invasions brought a new and, economically and socially speaking, reactionary element into play. The old Rome was virtually in ruins, and reconstruction had begun, when successive tidal waves of barbarian tribes and hordes flooded in upon all portions of the Empire—probably a result of a turnover on its side of the huge giant we know as China; a movement of Asian humanity whose causes we still do not comprehend.

It has been common practice to take it for granted that the incoming of these peoples, with their fine physical energy and unexhausted vigour, breathed new life into the decadent economic and social forms of a great civilisation in decay. Even Marx and Engels were of that opinion. But it seems to me that this view is incorrect. The Huns, the Goths, the Franks, the Visigoths and the rest of the invaders, who themselves held slaves, were admittedly at a lower stage of human development than the populations whose armies they rarely defeated in the open field, but whose social organisation was no longer sufficiently powerful to resist persistent attacks by overwhelming numbers. These great tribes were all of them still in the status of gentile development; they had none of them reached the point of civilisation. Not only so, but their whole social system was incapable of absorbing into itself the much

more highly advanced organised community upon which they imposed themselves. Consequently, their influence upon the populations which came under their domination was in no sense progressive, but on the contrary reactionary. The conquered, so far from being absorbed by the conquerors, in the long run absorbed and civilised them. But this was the work of centuries. And it is the extreme difficulty of following the steps of this long process which renders the history of the so-called Dark Ages so obscure even now.

The complete overthrow of slavery seems to have been checked, rather than hastened, by the advent of the barbarians. The free peasant farmers, the coloni and the free workers of the cities, who were going forward hand in hand into a fresh combination, the details of which we can now only surmise, found themselves submerged by an influx of uncultured and barbarous strangers, whom they could not understand, and whose methods of warfare entailed in many instances wholesale destruction of what was most useful and beautiful even in the decadent period of their own civilisation. Not until the medley of races and systems thus jumbled up together was clarified, in some degree, by the quasi-civilising of the invaders, did the advance recommence. This was, in fact, what might have been expected. A higher development of human society may conceivably influence, transform and by degrees uplift a lower, but there is no instance in the history of the race where the imposition of a lower form upon a higher has aided progress. Nor is there any more convincing instance of the latter truth than the successful invasion of the Roman Empire in its decline by the barbarians from without. This has always been the popular idea, and the growing science of sociology, in this as in some other cases, confirms the popular instinct.

Out of this period of barbarian conquests the next form of human servitude, feudalism and serfdom, gradually established itself; though in Gaul, long prior to these conquests, a somewhat similar form of social relations had grown up. The coloni and even the small free cultivators were at hand to constitute the basis of such a system of personal opposed to slave, or pecuniary, domination, as the prevailing form of human exploitation, even though both forms existed at the same time.

Just as one important section of the historians of economic

and social development seem to have gone wrong about the beneficent effect of barbarian influence upon populations which had attained to the level of civilisation, so another set of annalists, belonging to a very different school, have accepted a view which is demonstrably erroneous about the power exercised by Christianity in the whole of the earlier period of the decline of slavery. The freedom looked for by the Christians was not of this world. It was an individual emancipation from all material forms of existence, to be realised on the coming of the Christ, which they confidently expected would occur within a reasonable period, nearly always within the lifetime of Christians then in existence. Their hopes ascended to the heavens and disdained aspirations which were of the earth earthy. This spiritual consolation of eternal bliss hereafter far transcended any gratification to be derived from such a transitory advantage as manumission or complete liberty here. There were some fanatics, of course, who took a more natural view of things and desired to achieve a more tangible success, or even to inflict a justifiable punishment upon their persecutors, by direct action of a purely sublunary kind. Whether or not these zealots had anything to do with the burning of Rome under Nero, they probably had a hand in the three attempts made to burn down Diocletian's palace; while their unconcealed glee at the ugly end of his co-Emperor, Galerius, showed that they cherished a bitter hatred against those who despitefully used them. In fact the usual incapacity to divorce the flesh from the spirit manifested itself in early Christianity as in other supernatural creeds.

But although Christian propagandists sought for and obtained the bulk of their converts among the slave population, there is nothing to show that the Apostles and Fathers of the Church declared against slavery as an institution, so long as it was universally accepted by the rulers and great ones of the Empire as a necessary portion of human society. Far from this, the slaves themselves, Christians though they were, received direct orders from their most active leaders to obey their masters in the Lord. Not only did these sanctified leaders counsel submission to the prevailing order, but Christians owned slaves themselves, and were not called upon by the Church to manumit or emancipate them. In fact, at a later date, the famous St Thomas Aquinas

formally accepts the views of Aristotle as to the natural growth and practically indispensable necessity of servitude. Later still Christian institutions, under the direct ownership and control of the Church, were very slow to manumit their slaves and serfs; and in reality only did so when such manumission was economically advantageous for the better cultivation of their landed properties.

Christianity, in short, for generations regarded chattel slavery as a necessary institution, in the same way that this very religion and its representatives of various sects look upon wage slavery to-day. Compensation for degradation and misery here would be attained in the shape of eternal felicity hereafter —a most conservative and consoling view of human exploitation. But Christianity is no more blameworthy for this tendency to accommodate itself to the prevailing conditions of the time in the matter of slavery than Fetishism, Sun Worship, Buddhism, Mohammedanism or any other religion. Only when the claim is made that Christianity was an effective agency in bringing about the downfall of slavery does it become necessary to point out that the Founder and Fathers of the prevailing Asiatic creed were quite as little disposed as the priests of Jupiter, the Stoic philosophers or the Emperors of Rome to run counter to the legalised slavery of the day. And just as the latter adopted a more humane ethic when slavery became less economically advantageous, so the Christian Church, very tentatively and slowly, took the same line, as soon as its leading men were affected by the humaner views born of the change of economic and social conditions.

Then, indeed, we may freely admit that the nobler sons of the Apostolic Church were still more strongly influenced than their heathen predecessors by the current feeling of the time. They used their spiritual powers to help on death-bed manumissions and everyday emancipation. Humanitarian psychology, which may have somewhat anticipated the full material evolution in the highest minds of the previous period, now became the common property, in this particular department, of all decent men of religion. Yet it was not religion but economics that inaugurated the transformation which, once begun, went steadily forward to modern times. However, in our own day, it is interesting to observe that in the Southern States of the

great republic of North America, in the West Indies and elsewhere, negro slavery was widely championed by the clergy of the Christian churches in the nineteenth century.

In antiquity, then, chattel slavery failed for economic reasons. It still exists where those economic causes have not come into play. But the change even in ancient Rome was very various, and the increase of coloni and free settlers who were held by tribute from the soil did not relieve the bulk of the agricultural population from economic servitude. The two sorts of coloni were under the harrow of landlords small and large. One set of coloni who were definitely attached to the soil were in effect little better than slaves, without the physical chains of slavery. Their persons were largely under the control of the proprietors, and they were exposed to harsh treatment at their landowner's will. They were so absolutely bound to the soil that they could be sold, as cultivators upon it, as an integral portion of the estate, though they could not be thus sold apart from the property. The free settlers who paid to the owners tribute in kind were in a better position. But even they were subject to such increasing insecurity of holding, owing to the power of the landowner to evict at his good pleasure, with no redress on the part of the tenant, that their freedom was greatly limited. Moreover, there was always hanging over them the likelihood of an arbitrary increase of their payments in kind for the right to cultivate the soil, so that they could by degrees be reduced to the status of the bonded serfs.

Hadrian and other Roman emperors endeavoured to protect these coloni from personal and economic tyranny by law. Legislation was passed which prevented the landowners from exercising unrestrained rights of eviction, or increasing the amounts of the payments in kind. These enactments told in favour of the free settlers, and even secured some protection to the bonded serfs until the break-up of the Empire, custom coming in to strengthen the law. With the influx of the Germanic tribes the legislative protection necessarily lapsed.

There was thus, even at the most advanced stage of Imperial administration, no complete abrogation of slavery. It had economically and socially failed as the basis of the entire structure; but it still remained in its decaying period as a portion of the edifice, though its harshness of outline was toned down and

its injurious features were ameliorated. No sudden break took place. The changes were gradual, though continuous, and were extended over ages, during which retrogressions occurred that tended to obscure to observers the general advance. The admirable apophthegm, which throws light upon so many of the obscure passages in human history, that progress in civilisation invariably comes from what we are accustomed to regard as "the bad side" of society, was never more directly applicable than in the development from slavery. Slavery was the bad side of Roman Imperialism, the side of the oppressed, who exhibited all the mean and degraded qualities of their servitude save in their exceptional but futile revolts against this slavery. Yet from slavery was begotten the economic and social revolution, accompanied, but little influenced, by sporadic upheavals and violence, which paved the way to the new forms of serfdom and feudalism. There was not, and there could not be, any sudden transformation; all who attempted this, however noble their intentions were, however useful their example for later periods, nay, no matter how much they may apparently have helped by their very failure to anticipate events, in truth, rather aided reaction, for the time being, than set forward the hands of revolution on the dial of human development. Only when the stage had been unconsciously reached where fruition was possible could the ablest and most self-sacrificing of our race, by understanding the material and social facts of their surroundings, mentally react in some degree upon those surroundings; and thus, still slowly, but none the less usefully, help to lead their fellow-men along the path whose immediate direction and ultimate goal they alone first saw. The unforeseen and uncontrollable irruption of the barbarian hordes and marauding invaders, like the ruthless attack of the Jews upon Palestine, of the Spaniards on South America and Mexico, or of the British on India, are exceptional incidents of racial and social aggression which interfere with the course of events locally, but do not check the general advance.

## CHAPTER XII

## THE RISE AND POWER OF GOLD

Exchange, money, usury and the growth of the merchant class played a great part in the first break-up of the gentile system of society with its communism and general freedom, and in the establishment of a series of political institutions based upon private possession, not only of personal belongings, but of the plots of land which formerly were owned and cultivated by the gens. The origin of exchange between tribes and their gentes with other tribes and their gentes was everywhere similar. What I have called the practice of permissive grab—a request for some envied article by one tribal chief from another, which by unbroken custom could not be refused—or tribal exchange through a recognised agent among widely separated groups, developed into more or less systematic barter. This barter is to be found among nomadic hordes of the earliest form of organised savagery, such as the Australian aborigines. Exchange of the superfluities which might exist in one horde for articles required for use or decoration by another horde reached among these hordes, as is alleged, to such a point that the agent of the primitive exchange was conceded special privileges, in passing from one horde to another, in order to enable him to effect the common purpose. However this may be, the rudimentary form of exchange was tribal, or communal, though it might be conducted through elected or hereditary chiefs or other tribal agents.

Such barter of products for products, without any medium of exchange whatever to equate the value of the articles desired, and therefore exchanged, on both sides of the tribal commerce, may be observed among savages and barbarians down to our own time. Barter of this kind has been the rule between white men and savage tribes all over the world. The chaffering, by increase or decrease, of the amounts offered between the bargainers went on until both were satisfied. As between the

savage or barbarian tribes thus exchanging, good faith was the rule; and even white men were, not unfrequently, honest in the early stages of such transactions when trading with goods of their own, which, in these social conditions, had little intrinsic value on their market as compared with the articles offered by the natives. In this primitive barter, also, there was little room for that cultivated art of adulteration and deception which is so marked a feature of civilised trade. The absence of a medium of exchange reduced the whole transaction to elaborate haggling on the part of the tribes engaged. But continuous barter soon engenders a medium of exchange as a matter of convenience. Here, again, we may admire the ingenuity of our communal ancestors who thus hit upon what appears a highly refined method of facilitating transactions between peoples whose sense of private ownership was still unawakened. This medium of exchange, before and after the introduction of slavery, appears, to begin with, in the form of articles of use or decoration easily portable and transferable, such as shells, whale-teeth, wampum necklaces, pieces of copper or skins, packets of tea, dried fish and the like. The habitual employment of these things as recognised means of exchange over vast tracts of country was common; and some of them can be observed at the present time performing similar functions.

There is nothing to show, however, that the use of these tokens in trading led to hoarding by individuals, or brought about any economic or social domination by one individual, or set of individuals, or caste, over other members of the community. The medium of exchange was used as a medium of exchange only. Articles of use or decoration were traded away for so many cowries or bits of copper, and these same cowries or bits of copper were parted with again to obtain different desired articles from other tribes. Hoarding for the purpose of further hoarding was unknown; although accidental accumulation was possible and gambling or betting might go on among individuals who had a supply of the current medium of exchange in their hands. But there was as yet no application of these stores to purposes of further accumulation or social domination. They were used for trade and for trade alone.

Cattle gathered in large herds, tribally owned, seem first to have given in the Eastern Hemisphere a constant, instead of an

accidental surplus for exchange. This surplus, in the form of cheese, skins, horn, constituted desirable articles for human groups at a lower stage of development. As patriarchal property superseded gentile ownership, and slavery helped to extend the size of the herds, exchange became continuous and added greatly to the wealth and even luxury of the cattle-owners. But now, as exchange itself took on an economic form, the cow itself and the ploughing ox, when fully grown, figured throughout as the units of exchange. This development was very long in coming about ; it was also long in its duration and very wide in its extent. The cow, in particular, constituted for many centuries the chief medium of exchange among the populations of Europe and Asia. Here again the accumulation of cows and oxen in larger and larger herds, while they greatly increased the wealth of their owners and enabled them to keep bodies of free retainers as well as slaves, did not put them in any position of economic domination by hoarding and usury. Cows and oxen as means and units of exchange were used solely to fulfil that social function, in the early stage of the growth of commerce, as other units referred to had been before, and contemporaneously —namely, to facilitate transfer of useful articles and luxuries.

The exchange values of animals were roughly established from the cow downwards, in a series of equivalents which varied very slightly over long periods. Thus one cow was the equivalent of two ploughing oxen, or ten sheep, and then throughout the whole domain of articles which came into this widespread exchange. Universality of exchange on the basis of the cow unit can be fully traced. Gold, which was discovered, refined and used by men ages before silver, first supplemented and then, as social changes advanced, very gradually replaced cattle as the principal medium of exchange. The quantity of gold at the disposal of tribes in the higher stages of barbarism, as well as of individuals in the earlier steps towards approaching civilisation, far exceeded the amounts commonly admitted in view of the assumed rarity of this precious metal in these times. But gold itself was originally taken as a token of value, and used as a medium of exchange of products in all markets by reference to its value in relation to the cow. And the standard of gold as this medium, thus established, became as general as the cattle standard itself. That is to say, it was constituted and

regulated, as to its equivalence of value for exchange purposes, against cows and oxen, which formed the basis and criterion of its exchangeable worth: it was not gold in the first instance which decreed the worth of cows, oxen, sheep, etc., but cows and oxen which decided the value of gold.

So clearly was this the case that even coined money bore evidence of its origin in its early names derived from cattle. The pre-eminence of cattle in ancient estimations of value is shown from the fact that, even in the early days of Rome, the assessments for the payments of taxes in coin were made, not on the acreage of land occupied and owned by the citizen assessed, but on the number of cattle he possessed. The worth of gold, when it had attained to this position, in relation to cows and oxen, was arrived at originally by measure of quantity, as in quills full of gold particles. Later it was determined not by quantity only but by weight. This weight in its varying proportions was decided and checked by weighing in a balance: so much gold against so many grains of wheat or other cereal.

Now it is a remarkable fact that, from the confines of Europe to the remotest parts of Asia, the unit weight of gold so arrived at was practically the same in all the various countries, differing immensely in their racial characteristics and even in their social development, occupying this vast territory. The value of a cow in gold varied slightly from the weight of 130 grains to 135 grains, sometimes, but rarely, rising as high as 140 grains of refined gold. So far, therefore, from the pure gold standard of value in exchange being a modern invention, the ox-weight, as it is called by Mr Ridgeway, was the first generally recognised metal medium of exchange. Thus the weight of gold which appeared in Syria, in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, in Italy, in Egypt, in Greece, in Gaul, in Spain, and practically everywhere within the then known world, through a long period of antiquity, was the 135 grains of gold, used as the standard of the cattle-gold unit.

But a definite weight of gold, in its original ox-unit of 130 to 135 grains for a cow, was an unguaranteed and uncoined medium of exchange only, and so remained for a period which we are quite unable to estimate. And this small weight was divided up into smaller weights or portions for the purpose of exchange against other things or animals smaller than the value of a cow.

The full significance of this universal equivalent was not appreciated until much later. Gold was in some regions regarded as a metal for use and decoration, to an extent which would probably have been fulfilled by other more plentiful but less easily mined metals, had they been available with the appliances of the time. The quantity of human exertion necessary to obtain this precious metal in regions where it was obtainable was not reckoned of importance, when it only formed part of the general labour of the community, after such labour, apart from the gold miners, had become sufficient to provide its members with ample food and other necessaries.

Those people who brought down their gold to trade with others on a higher level of culture, in return for things which they desired and could not produce themselves, carried out their transactions entirely on the plane of barter in its early shape. On the one side the articles which it was known were wanted were shown; on the other side the quantity of gold offered for the coveted objects was displayed. Then the amount was increased or decreased on both sides until the necessary equality of estimation at that time was reached, and the trading was then and there completed.

Even where gold was obtained in a society which had arrived at a relatively high level of production of articles of use or luxury, a long period elapsed before the need for weighing gold, or, later, silver, in all transactions, was obviated, and certified coinage took the place of nuggets or grains of refined gold of specified, but in no wise guaranteed weights. Gold also, however it may have been obtained, still performed its function as a medium of exchange, because it was itself valued highly as a metal for use, as well as for decoration, for public and private purposes. Thus it became in the form of weight, beginning with the ox-unit or rather cow-unit, by far the most convenient means of conducting exchange when the ruder forms of direct barter had been found insufficient. It was employed in this way, to an extent far exceeding what might have been looked for among the peoples who thus applied it to their trading, having regard to the stage of culture which they had reached in other respects.

But gold was still confined to its use for exchange when brought into the growing world of trade. Hoarding of gold,

with the specific intention of using it for very different social objects, was as yet quite unknown. Accumulations of gold there were; display of wealth in gold was not uncommon. Instances of such amassing of treasure were to be discerned both in East and West, in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, in Gaul, formerly a considerable gold-producing country, and even in Britain and Ireland. It was known among tribes which had not reached the highest level in the barbaric stage. But the fact that very valuable gold ornaments were often buried with their possessors shows that gold had achieved nothing at all approaching to the value of estimation it attained later on. It is quite inconceivable, for example, that the relatives of an English or American billionaire should bury with him his weighty gold dinner service, or the cherished gold ornaments of his mourning wife. They would much rather go back a stage in historic usages and show their sorrow by immolating his domestic servants, or even his despairing widow herself, on the tomb of the deceased. But if gold were really buried to-day with the corpse of the deeply lamented, as a testimony to his value when living, it is certain that resurrectionists of high standing would not be debarred, by any fear of the supernatural guardians of buried treasure, from looting the grave of the dead. This "sacred hunger for gold" did not inspire the early possessors of that precious metal. Consciously or unconsciously, the great barbarians and their immediate successors used gold socially, without allowing it to use them.

Throughout we can discern that this use of gold as a general medium of exchange was a long and very gradual growth from the cow-value of the specific weight of gold upwards. The cow, not the gold, began it. Man finding gold and proving it to be a practically imperishable element, easy to divide and recombine—most effective also for personal display—did not set to work of his own foresight to turn it into a medium of exchange. It was a series of unwitting steps that led him from one point in this evolution to the next, and the next, and the next. It is usual nowadays to assume that trade, through a medium of exchange, having superseded barter, the further development to the unlimited use of coined money was inevitable. But this process might be arrested for centuries by ordinance from above, by deliberate intention, in fact, to prevent the domina-

tion of commerce and the tyranny of the precious metals, as we see in the case of China. There the rulers for generations appear to have foreseen in some inscrutable way the baneful influence of uncontrolled money power; and, as will be mentioned later, they checked it at its source, by closing down mines for gold and silver.

In other parts of the world, however, and especially in the basin of the Mediterranean, which was the centre of Western civilisation, the course of economic progress, through the coinage of the precious metals, has shown man gradually overmastered by one of his own instruments. Gold, first in rough weights, and then, much more definitely, stamped and certified coin of regulated weight and fineness, having become the universal medium of exchange and the measure of the value of articles transferred, became also the representative of all articles of value and the means of purchasing them. Then it was that men found themselves, quite uncomprehendingly, at the mercy of their own creation, handled by their fellow-men. Private property in this dominant but practically unknown entity, money, made itself felt to an extent previously quite unthinkable.

Throughout the ancient world, and very far into the modern, land and agriculture formed the basis of the entire economic and social system of the great majority of the states and empires, outrivalling, in their pre-eminence, all other departments to which human industry could be applied. Whether occupied with breeding and depasturing flocks and herds, or with the production of cereals, or with both combined, whether as a great landowner employing slave labour on a large scale as owner of extensive areas, or as a small free proprietor cultivating his plot of ground to supply his own and his family wants, the landowners and the land cultivators were by far the most important elements of the state.

But over against this private ownership of the means of cultivating the land and the land itself, which arose from the break-up of the old gentes, stood the great and growing influence of money as money, which produced nothing and destroyed much. Its corrupting and corroding economic and social force was exercised, not as a mere medium of exchange, to equate values both of which were not present on the market at the same time, but as the universal equivalent of wealth of every sort, and

therefore capable of buying marketable articles of all kinds from men and women, downwards or upwards, according to the estimation of the period. When the rich man desired money for luxury, to purchase political power, or to gratify clients—when the successful aspirant to supreme control was compelled to give bonuses to his soldiery or to defray the expenses of his triumph—then money was his primal requisite. When, on the other hand, the poor man was called upon to pay taxes in a bad season, or to purchase seed for another season's sowing, or to replace the loss of a cow or an ox—when the citizen required help of any kind—then money and money alone was of use to him. Thus money represented in the hands of its possessor *real wealth* with which he controlled all other apparently accidental forms of wealth. This money need not be gold, when once the money form of universal ownership obtains control. Silver or copper may perform the same service, or disservice, in the early stages of wealth accumulation and currency domination. For, in a poor society, these metals may suffice for the uses of the surrounding region of the City or State which exercises control. But gold is universal, and gold and silver together came to rule the old world.

There were two great means of accumulating wealth in antiquity, outside of furious slave-driving, conquest and piracy: commerce (which to a large extent comprised systematic piracy) and usury. "Civilisation created a class which took no part in production but concerned itself solely with exchange—merchants. Former classes, both inchoate and complete, were devoted to production exclusively. These classes divided the producers into those who did the work, and the men who controlled them, or into producers upon a large and a small scale. But, in this case, a class for the first time makes its appearance which assumes control of production generally, and puts producers at its disposal, without itself taking any part in production at all. This class becomes the indispensable go-between for two separate producers; and takes toll from both, under the pretence of saving them the trouble and risk of exchanging their products, of extending their markets for their goods and thus becoming the most useful class of all."

Such was the commencement of the great historic development of the much-belauded trader and merchant adventurer.

To him gold was the goods of all goods, whose power of transformation endured for ever, to the ceaseless benefit of him who possessed it and used it to his own greater advantage. Money speedily accumulated in the hands of merchants, and was employed for the specific purpose of obtaining more money by continuous purchase and resale. As, therefore, exchanges increased, with the growth of demand for articles of use and luxury, and the extension of the markets, so did the commerce and the power of the merchant class increase with their affiliated departments of piracy, slave-hunting, slave-dealing, acquisition of precious metals, etc. As merchants they played no part in the production of the goods which they were ever ready to buy and to sell; but they held all producers who, for any cause, wished to dispose of their produce, or to obtain advances upon it, in the hollow of their hand, their rapacity only being checked by the fear that they might cause their customers to divert their dealings into another mercantile channel, if such were available.

Nor were these early merchants of the Mediterranean at all behind-hand in economising the gold and silver which they amassed and avoiding the risk of transport by the use of drafts and credit, the employment of which, to swell their stock of available trading capital, they had learned from older civilisations to the east of them. In consequnce of this, merchants, with their money and their fleets and their commercial connections, became the most powerful active influence; and gold and silver in their hands displayed a faculty of economic mastery over their clients, and even over independent populations, which was little short of a mystery to those who suffered under it. For merchants, as merchants, performed no valuable social service whatever, nor did they *as a class* run any risk of loss. This or that master of the art of buying and selling goods might speculate unwisely and lose his acquired money; but this only meant that the corpus of his pecuniary property was distributed among his competitors and rivals: the merchant class itself got relatively richer all the time. Relatively richer, because even the very rich of those days could bear no comparison in wealth with the vast fortunes accumulated in our time. And the methods of piling up their wealth were different, being based upon a different system of production.

But the merchants were powerful and unscrupulous enough during the whole of the long period when mercantile money—capital in its childhood—held sway. Tyre, Sidon, Athens, Carthage and the other great trading cities of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor owed their wealth to this source. The universal equivalent in their possession put the world of commerce at their feet. Gold and silver were kings of that commerce. These wholly impersonal agents of almost mysterious influence gave those who handled them as go-betweens unlimited and universal power, such as even great emperors, great generals, great statesmen scarcely possessed. Money, once enthroned as the economic deity, before whom all must bow, worked its way against the general sentiment of humanity, against the ethics of the highest philosophers and the abstract brotherhood of religious teachers into world-wide dominance, in a manner which even we, who can trace its rise, expansion, further growth and subsequent development, can scarcely comprehend, though we are now approaching its last term of control.

What underlay the entire evolution and turned a useful human instrument into an impalpable machine for human oppression was the accumulation of this social force in private hands. Nothing can be more social than exchange, conducted for the benefit of two sets of producers, no matter what the medium of such exchange may be; gold itself under such conditions can work no harm to either side. Nothing can be more anti-social than exchange conducted between producers for the private and personal advantage of a third party, a non-producer who owns the universal medium of exchange, gold, which is used to exploit both of the real exchangers. Gold itself under these conditions becomes a power which eludes human control.

Furthermore, this impersonal and unhuman creation of humanity, and greed for its possession, engendered the most cruel treatment of all slaves engaged in mining for those metals which held a permanent dictatorship over man in the stage of private property and individually controlled exchange. So long as slaves were obtainable in large numbers by capture in war, by private piracy, by organised razzias, or by purchase on the public market at a cheap price, there was no limit to the ferocious pressure put upon them, under conditions where

organised revolt was very difficult or impossible, to extract the greatest quantity of gold, silver or copper they could. No other consideration whatever entered into the matter.

Humanity had no say. The one and only object was to extract as much of the universal equivalent as possible within as short a space of time as could be achieved. The gain, under the conditions described, was as direct, immediate and as promptly realisable as it is in the mines of South Africa to-day. The owners of the mines and their associates were thus provided with the means of exchange and of the next great means of accumulation and domination—usury—by the simple process applied daily in the gold mines of Egypt, described by Diodorus Siculus in the passage given below. These slaves were maltreated in order to increase the wealth of the rulers of Egypt themselves. The same system prevailed for centuries in the Greek mines, in the mines owned by the Carthaginians and afterwards by the Romans in Spain, Sicily, Gaul and elsewhere. It lasted so long, in fact, and made its appearance at all times in history, where the value of human life ethically and economically was of small account in comparison with the wealth acquired by wholesale brutality.

The following passage, quaintly translated from the famous description by Diodorus Siculus of Egyptian gold-mining, is a fair account of the mining of metals for direct profit in antiquity as also in Peru, Mexico and South Africa in modern times, where the miners are wholly unprotected from the greed and cruelty of their masters. A careful study of systematic slave-driving of young children in the mills of Lancashire at the beginning of the nineteenth century shows that, less than a hundred years ago, similar atrocities were commonly practised in the industrial districts of Great Britain at the expense of defenceless infants.

"On the confines of Egypt, Arabia, which marches with it, and Ethiopia, is a spot possessed of many great mines of gold, where the gold is got together with much suffering and expense. Since the earth is black and has lodes and veins of quartz of surpassing whiteness, which excel in brilliancy all those natural objects which are noted for their lustre, those who are in charge of the mining works, by the members of the labourers prepare the gold. For the kings of Egypt collect together and consign

to the gold-mines those who have been condemned for crime, and who have been made captive in war, and, furthermore, those who have been ruined by false slanders, and who owing to an outburst of anger have been cast into prison, sometimes only themselves, but sometimes, also, with all their kindred, at one and the same time, both exacting punishment from those who have been condemned and obtaining great revenues by means of those who were engaged in the labour. Those who have been consigned to the mines being many in number and all bound with fetters . . ."

[One of the kings of Egypt caused at least 80,000 persons who were only suffering from physical defects and illness to be thrown into the horrors of the mines in a single year we are told.]

". . . toil at their tasks continuously, both by night and by day, getting no rest, and jealously kept from all escape. For guards composed of foreign soldiers who speak languages different from theirs are set over them, so that no one is able by association or any kindly intercourse to corrupt any one of the warders. The hardest of the earth which contains the gold they burn with a good deal of fire and make soft and work it with their hands, but the soft rock and that which can easily yield to stone and iron chisels is worked down by thousands of hapless beings. And the craftsman who selects the stone takes the lead in the whole process and gives instructions to the workmen. And of those who have been plunged into this misery those who excel in bodily strength cut the glittering rock with iron pickaxes, not by bringing skill to bear upon their tasks but by sheer brute force, and they hew out galleries, not in a straight line but following the vein in the glittering rock. They then, living in darkness owing to the twists and turns in the adits, carry about lamps fitted on their foreheads, and changing in many ways the posture of their bodies according to the peculiarity of the rock throw down on the floor the fragments hewn and this they do unceasingly under the severity and stripes of the overseer. But the boys who have not yet reached manhood, going in through the adits into the excavations in the rock, laboriously cast up the rock thrown down bit by bit and convey it to the place outside the mouth of the adit into the light. But the

men who are more than thirty years old take a fixed measure of the stone mined and pound it in stone mortars with iron pestles until they reduce it to the size of a vetch. From these the women and older men receive the stone now reduced to pieces the size of a vetch, and, as there is a considerable number of mills there in a row, they cast the stone upon them, they stand beside them at the handle, in threes and twos, they grind until they have reduced the measure given them to the fineness of wheaten flour. And since they are all regardless of their persons, and have not a garment to cover their nakedness, no one who saw them could refrain from pitying the hapless creatures owing to their excessive misery. For there is absolutely no consideration nor relaxation, for sick or maimed, for aged man or weak woman, but all are forced to toil on at their tasks until, worn out by their miseries, they die amid their toils. Wherefore, the unhappy beings regard the future as more to be dreaded than the present, owing to the excess of punishment, and expect death as more to be longed for than life. But, finally, the craftsmen get the ground-up stone and complete the process. For they rub the ground-up quartz on a broad board placed on a slight incline, pouring water on it. Then the earthy part of it, melting away by the action of the liquid, flows down along the sloping board, but the part that contains the gold adheres to the board owing to its weight. Repeating this process frequently, at first with their hands, they gently rub it, but after this, pressing it lightly with delicate sponges, they take up, by these means, the soft and earthy part until the gold dust is left in a state of purity.

"Finally other craftsmen, taking over the collected gold by measure and weight, put it into earthenware pots, and, in proportion to the amount they put in, a piece of lead and lumps of salt and furthermore a small quantity of tin and they add barley bran. Then having made a well-fitted cover and having laboriously smeared it over with mud, they bake it in kilns for five days and as many nights continuously. Then, after letting it cool, they find none of the other things in the vessels, but get the gold in a pure state with but a slight reduction in quantity. With so many and so great sufferings is the production of gold at the frontiers of Egypt completed. For Nature herself makes it plain, I think, that gold is produced with toil, is guarded with

difficulty, is most eagerly sought for, and enjoyed with mixed pleasure and pain."

Thus it seems to me Diodorus Siculus, so simply and directly Englished, gives a more terrible account of the real horrors of slavery in the mining industry than can be found anywhere else. It calls for no strain upon the imagination to see these tortured human creatures slowly dragging onwards to death under the whips of the slave-drivers, in order only to provide an article of exchange and luxury for their masters. But wherever slaves were easily come by, could be cheaply replaced in quantity, and cost little to feed and superintend, similar horrors were practised. The slaves of the Romans recruited by wholesale capture came under the same law when production of any sort was carried on for gain.

This method of mining was also used in the mines of Peru under the Spaniards, and rapidly worked out the bodies of the unfortunates sent to toil in them by the tens of thousands. This frightful working and flogging of men, from which there was no escape but unnatural death or suicide, forms a strange contrast to the gold-washing and simple gold extraction from gold seams carried on at the same period by gentile tribes for decoration and barter. Gold to the savages and barbarians represented no more than a metal valuable in itself for its durable and decorative qualities. They had no merchant class to fasten upon it and convert it, as a universal equivalent, into a means of individual exchange and of private accumulation as well.

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF USURY

Out of mercantile money operations and the hoarding of gold for the purpose of increasing the area of trading arose money-lending and usury. Usury was the second great factor of wealth accumulation in antiquity, as also in the Middle Ages. And the influence of the moneyed class through its two sections of Merchants and Usurers, which were not infrequently combined, became so powerful that they were able to procure the enactment in their own favour against their clients and debtors of the most atrocious laws that were ever placed on a Statute Book. Hence, of all the class wars and economic antagonisms which have made the history of human society and civilisation since the beginning of private property the perpetual conflict between debtors and creditors was one of the most bitter. No nation escaped this internal disruption, in which the old gentile order was underpinned by slavery, private property, exchange and usury.

There was a never-ceasing economic and social fight between two forms of private property: private ownership of land on the one hand, private ownership of gold, lent to needy proprietors of the soil, on the other. The territory of the Athenian peasants was at one time palisaded with posts recording the mortgages held by the money-lenders. All Attica was in pawn to the usurers comparatively early in the growth of that small but important state. Debtors, no matter in what manner their debts were incurred, were liable to pay to the uttermost farthing the highest rates of interest, incurring, in case of default, at the demand of the creditors, imprisonment and other brutal forms of penalty. This wound up, in the event of the debtor's final incapacity to discharge his indebtedness, with the right, frequently exercised, to enslave the unfortunate borrower to the usurer himself, or to sell him and his family into foreign slavery. Hence arose a relentless economic and social warfare where the usurers proved in the long run historically successful, but which

in several cases brought about a definite revolt against the money lords, who had been carrying on their political and pecuniary antagonism to the free peasants and the gentile nobility at the same time. To preserve the entire state from dissolution, the rights of the creditors were invaded and overthrown by the wrongs of their debtors.

In Athens two revolutions occurred within three generations, one mainly social, the other chiefly political. By the first the powers of the creditors were simply swept away, and the Government relieved the debtors of all their obligations. By the second the new political constitution, based on landownership, and political power founded upon ownership of land irrespective of any gentile relations, created the democratic state. The democracy, of course, were a superior class of citizens over against the slaves. What occurred in Attica happened also in the rest of the Greek states. But though debtors might be temporarily relieved from their burdens and made free men again at the expense of the money lords, usury soon resumed its ascendancy. No legislation could permanently check its advance.

Athens became as important in the world of commerce and money-lending as in the sphere of intellect, art and general culture. Corinth, although a producing as well as a trading centre, attained to such pre-eminence in the domain of luxury and elegant debauchery that she then held a position in the civilised world like that which Paris and the French Riviera hold to-day. Men who had gained wealth from slavery, commerce, piracy and usury flocked to this great and beautiful city of organised pleasure to squander their gains in the most costly and non-moral forms of enjoyment. Certainly in all branches of the acquisition of wealth, however unscrupulous or cruel, the Greeks were past masters; and the Romans, whose whole literature and science and general culture were due to the Greeks also, learnt from them all the methods of amassing riches in free and conquered countries with the least risk of loss.

The colonies of Tyre and other Phœnician cities, whose wealth was due almost exclusively to commerce, were, like Tyre herself, little more than trading centres of greater or less importance, with the exception of Carthage. These trading centres were minor octopuses drawing their wealth from persistent exploitation of foreign producers of every class. At times they derived

huge advantages from the complete ignorance of their clients of the real exchange value of their products in the more highly developed society of which Tyre formed a part. The story that gold was so plentiful at one time in Tyre that the Tyrians made their anchors of gold, is doubtless based upon the tradition that they found the natives of Spain in possession of such quantities of silver, and ready to barter it on such very advantageous terms for Tyrian "trade," that the Phœnician mariners loaded up their vessels, to the extent of all they could possibly carry, with the silver thus cheaply obtained.

It was from this same district that the Carthaginians afterwards derived such vast supplies of silver. It is said that nearly 50,000 slaves worked in one group of mines. Though this number is probably an exaggeration, it is certain that great quantities of silver were obtained from Spain, especially from the mines belonging to the Barca gens, of which Hannibal was a chief. It was this wealth, no doubt, which allowed him to keep up his wonderful seventeen years' campaign. Carthage derived her supply of gold from West Africa, where the native tribes on the coast were in the habit of bartering the gold they obtained from the auriferous sand of the rivers for the articles they desired from the Phœnician traders. This business was done on the primitive lines of chaffering, which, indeed, were practised with tribes at a similar stage of development all over the then civilised world. This gold and silver then enabled the Mediterranean trading cities to gain their great economic influence.

Commerce on a large scale was regarded on the whole as a reputable means by which to acquire wealth, the process of exploitation of producers being concealed; usury, the lending of money in order to obtain more money in return for the original advance, always bore a bad name in the great slave societies of the West. Aristotle, who stood up so stoutly for the institution of slavery, had not a good word to say for usury or the lending of money at interest. In fact all lending of money at interest was stigmatised as usury. It was "money breeding money," by the accident of owning a surplus of the universal equivalent, without any pretence whatever of even personal service, productive or unproductive. It was a direct trading upon the individual needs of the borrowers on security, which began by engendering hardship, in the majority of cases, and

finished by the ruin and cruel harassment of the debtors. Therefore usury was an accursed thing.

How, then, has it come about that the lending of money, condemned alike by the philosophers of paganism and the fathers of the Church, should nowadays be regarded as quite a respectable business, when practised on "reasonable" terms, whether on a large or on a small scale? The change of view is really due, like nearly all the other modifications of opinion through the centuries, to the change in the form of production itself. Suffice it to say here that lending at interest in modern civilisation takes, in most cases, the form of participation in profit or income gained by the borrower. It rarely appears as an actual trading upon necessity. When it does, in the shape of pawnbroking, or lending at very high rates of interest, then society generally looks on such transactions from the ancient point of view. That, however, the debtor, according to law, is always in the wrong, and still liable to personal punishment for non-fulfilment of contract, is clear, since, until comparatively recent years, debtors in England were subject to close, and frequently to permanent, confinement if their creditors were not paid. Even in the twentieth century debtors, under pretence of "Contempt of Court," are still subject in Great Britain to the same imprisonment, though this penalty is presumed to have been done away with many years ago. So difficult is it to shake off the dominance of the money power which had its origin thousands of years ago.

But the operations of money-lenders and usurers in general, even in Greece, Tyre and Carthage, were comparatively insignificant beside the scope of these pecuniary operations in the Roman Empire. The contrast between the early days of Rome, after the breakdown of the gentile relations and the establishment of the aristocratic republic, on private property and conquest—the contrast of Rome, with her free farmers and free citizen soldiery fighting for what they believed to be their own advantage, and the Rome of the great foreign wars for slaves, direct plunder and wider scope for trade and usury, with paid troops, was astounding. The intermediate struggle for political power between the aristocracy of the gentes and the plebeians who were attracted or brought into Rome from without resulted in the gradual victory of the latter. From the first Carthaginian War between the land-cultivating, land-

worshipping aristocracy and people of Rome, with their growing military power, and the great Phœnician commercial and naval plutocracy of Carthage and its colonies, to the second Carthaginian War and Hannibal's astounding invasion of Italy, there had grown up in Rome itself an entirely different view of trade and commerce from that which had previously existed.

The money wealth of Carthage consisted chiefly in silver, which then probably bore to gold the relation of 12 to 1. Scipio after his victories brought back from Carthage 120,000 pounds' weight of silver, of probably sixteen ounces to the pound. This, taking gold at the above ratio, would represent not less than £675,000 in gold, an enormous sum in those days. In addition there was to be an annual payment from Carthage of 20,000 talents of silver for fifty years. At the same time Rome became possessor of the fine Carthaginian dependencies. These vast territorial gains, besides those which were made in Italy itself, planted the commercial spirit in Rome and provided the means for gratifying it. The Romans, then, not only the plebeians but the patricians, turned to commerce with Sicily, Sardinia and Spain, and thus began that career of world-wide vampirism, allied to military conquest, which attained such marvellous and unprecedented development.

So Rome, having defeated Carthage in this first great struggle for domination in the basin of the Mediterranean, was herself captured by Carthaginian methods of commerce, afterwards supplemented by usury to an unparalleled extent. All the struggles between patricians and plebeians, all the assassinations of leaders, slaughter in the streets of Rome and in the provinces, proscriptions by Sylla, wholesale popular vengeance under Marius, were trifling when compared with the effects of this ruthless money power, which now spread through all the recently conquered provinces. The vast numbers of slaves, captured and sold in such quantities by the victorious legions that slaves became a mere drug in the market, the treasures looted from the temples and the houses of wealthy citizens were all of small value compared with the riches extorted from the subject populations of Greece and other countries by the swarm of predatory mercantile agents, money-lenders and farmers of the indemnities and taxes who followed in the wake of the victorious armies. The terrible inflictions of war itself might

have been overcome, lived down and forgotten, but the persistent drain of tribute and usury by the merciless blood-suckers who settled down upon the provinces engendered a hatred of the Romans and their rule which led to ruthless butchery by the suffering natives whenever an opportunity for revenge arose.

At the commencement of the great war against Mithridates, in which Sylla played so wonderful a part, no fewer than 100,000 Italians of this type are said to have been massacred in the various cities, either by the direct order or with the connivance of the king. The numbers of the victims thus disposed of may have been exaggerated, but that the debtors and tax-payers, having got their chance, made the most of it is quite certain. Similar revolts were of frequent occurrence alike throughout the successful and unsuccessful periods of the Republic, and always directed against the same class, but, like the risings of the slaves, to no purpose in the long run. With this difference, however, that the money power had come to stay throughout the whole period of private property civilisation, whereas slavery, in the form of chattel slavery, was destined to undergo marked modification. The success of the Carthaginian wars was the most important factor in the transformation of the old agricultural, aristocratic Rome into the Rome of the commercial era. Though the long class struggle between plebeians and patricians had been complicated, as in Greece, by the antagonism between debtors and creditors, which introduced the direct pecuniary element into class warfare, the debtors, by the relaxation of the law and cancellation of many of the debts, had gained a temporary victory. Nevertheless, prior to her crowning victories over her great rival, Rome was still the Rome of landowners of various grades. She and her allies had not, so far, been drawn into the network of commercialism and usury. Rome, in fact, after her success against Carthage, had to go through another period of crisis before her position was secured. The transition period well-nigh ruined the Republic.

The first-fruits of the new mercantilism were anarchy at home and general war in Italy and the provinces. Everywhere the small owners and cultivators disappeared, their land passed into the possession of a few great proprietors, and usury spread like a plague.

"A small oligarchy of great and little capitalists alone grew rich amidst the universal ruin. . . . This plutocracy enriched itself by despoiling mercilessly Italy and Asia, where the increase of imposts and fraudulent devices of the financial farmers of the revenue and taxes impoverished and crushed with debt the middle class and the people; by this means there was superadded to the gain of forcing the revenue for Italian capitalists the further profit from usury made easy and from the trade in men, whom they caused to be kidnapped in the adjacent countries and sold in Rome. . . . Meanwhile the public finances were disordered and the army disorganised; the fleet which had beaten Carthage lay idle in the ports of Italy. Rome failed even to put down the new and bloody revolts of the slaves which had broken out in Sicily and Campania" (FERRERO).

Such were the first effects of the growth of mercantilism in Rome. The great popular awakening under the leadership of the peasant of genius, Marius, whose defeat of the Cambri and Teutons gave him practically supreme power, was wholly unable to check or direct this economic influence. Efforts made to attract people to conquered lands soon failed from the sheer inexperience of agriculture of those who accepted the offers.

Hence it happened that, when Mithridates began his attack, bankruptcy and disaster stared the statesmen of the Republic full in the face. There was danger and defeat in every direction. Devastation throughout Italy and distrust elsewhere. That Rome should have surmounted this terrible crisis where barbarism and civilisation seemed successfully combined in arms against her, and misfortunes in the field had to be met with an almost empty treasury, is one of the wonders of her eventful history. But surmount it she did. The tide again turned in her favour. The influx of wealth into the great city transcended by far anything previously experienced. This wealth consisted in a mass of silver and gold, with art treasure and luxuries. Rome was a non-producing or at least a non-exporting centre throughout. Even the Italians who settled in her provinces, and devoted themselves and their families to the Romanisation of their respective districts and to commerce and usury, acted as agents draining away these riches amassed from the plunder of the known world.

In this respect Rome differed from other great cities of the

Mediterranean basin—Carthage, Alexandria, Corinth, Antioch, Marseilles, even Athens, though they got wealthy through commerce, were able to meet their imports in part by genuine products of their own. Not so Rome. All the trade with her was in one direction: *towards* this huge vampire city which sucked in wealth and obtained her supplies from Egypt and elsewhere by reason of tribute and taxes imposed as the result of conquest. Money capital, therefore, used in Roman commerce was wholly unproductive. Commerce helped to take back from Rome its money; and that tended in periods of disturbance to bring about pecuniary crises of utmost intensity at the centre. For the only capital which Rome possessed was commercial capital and money-lenders' capital, in the shape of the precious metals. Commercial capital, however, used in connection with a trade which is all from the circumference to the centre cannot by any possibility increase the wealth of that centre. The only means, therefore, by which Rome could enlarge her resources was by lending money, instead of spending it in luxury, in purchasing votes, in securing the support of the soldiery—on which vast sums were expended both in Republican and Imperial times—in giving vast displays to gratify the people, and similar wholly unproductive ways. And the only means of adding to the wealth already acquired was—Usury.

Rome, consequently, became the usurer of usurers. Quite apart from the borrowers on a large scale, the artisans and small cultivators, who were all along working side by side with slavery, were always liable to fall into distress. Then they were at the mercy of the lenders, who disbursed money which they could not profitably use in any other way, exacting for the accommodation heavy rates of interest which soon turned debtors into slaves. Money was the one thing needful to rich and poor alike. To the rich who wanted it for the purposes enumerated above; to the poor who had to make indispensable payments or fill up the void occasioned by some unforeseen misfortune. War helped usury in both ways above and below. So it came about that, though much of the really high-born aristocracy had disappeared, those who had taken their places as patricians were still more addicted to commercial transactions, large financial affairs of a profitable character and downright usury than their predecessors. Now the most powerful men in Rome rivalled the rich plebeians in their greed for gain and in their lack of

scruples as to how they became possessed of it. Pompey the Great was a usurer on a large scale, and demanded and obtained rates of interest which would be considered satisfactory by the most grasping of modern Shylocks. Even when lending to a large municipality his charge was 4 per cent. a month or 48 per cent. a year. Cæsar, who from his democratic policy in regard to the lower classes of citizens has been regarded as a man not only of great ability but of enlightened and humane views, Cæsar himself was closely connected by marriage and otherwise with great money-lenders, and lost no chance of turning an honest penny in the domain of finance. So with the majority of the others. Crassus, Lucullus, Cato, the uncle of Mæcenas, Brutus, all made use of the cash which had come to them in various ways for the purpose of extorting high rates of interest from borrowers in and out of Rome itself. In this department of money-dealing the Romans had little to learn.

Moreover, if commerce and usury were conducted wholesale, and the gains were proportionately great, then the transactions were quite honourable. The scale was the criterion of respectability. Cicero is careful to say so. Petty transactions were unworthy; conveyance on a large scale, however, was another matter. In fact the Romans of high degree took much the same view of commerce and usury that society in London to-day takes of shopkeeping. A small trader is a man of low class, but the head of a great store or of a series of shops marches up the ladder of profiteering through various grades of distinction into the House of Lords. The same with usury, which lost its ill-smelling odour in practical life in proportion to the magnitude of the loans. Even so to-day a wealthy pawnbroker is detestable: his son or grandson is a Cabinet Minister and a peer.

When once Rome had come under the yoke of money it was quite impossible for her to emancipate herself. There were no more rich and civilised territories to be despoiled. At home the greater part of rural production was conducted, whether on a large scale by slaves, or by freemen and coloni on a small, for the direct supply of the great proprietors and their retainers and urban slaves, within convenient distance of the towns and cities, or for the maintenance of the small owners and their families on the spot. It was this natural production, the main features of cultivation in parts of Italy remote from Rome and throughout the provinces, which kept Rome from collapsing

much sooner than she did. Urban interests dominated. But rural economy upheld the State, when the cultivators were not utterly ruined by devastation due to civil wars and foreign invasions, the spread of great slave-worked farms and pasturage as well as the weight of taxation and military service. Even when such ruin had been wrought other small farmers sprang up again, and continued to hold their own. For the money system, though all-powerful in Rome itself, never obtained complete control in the country districts.

This brief survey of Roman usury shows how completely the money power had become dominant all over the Empire wherever men were driven to borrow from any cause whatsoever. The decline and fall of Imperial supremacy left it still in control, wherever payments in kind were even partially replaced by pecuniary relations. Where money, the universal equivalent, was pressingly needed there the money-lender and usurer came in as an indispensable functionary in the society of the day. Rich and poor fell equally into his grasp: the wealthy noble who required advances for display or the impoverished peasant who was forced, as before, to pledge his holding in order to purchase seed in a bad season or to procure the tools necessary for his occupation. The usurer has extended all over the globe from the bunnia and shroff of India to the small pawnbroker and petty Shylock of the cities, from the bankers of the West, inheriting their trade from the commercial cities of the Mediterranean, to the great finance houses advancing on railway and other bonds.

Throughout the long period of overthrow and turmoil following upon the great barbarian invasions the money-lender and usurer still held his own, increasing his charges to the borrowers, and demanding all the tangible security he could for his advances on the ground of the uncertainty of the times. During the Middle Ages the same usurers were ever the most unpopular of mankind. Not unfrequently they suffered grievous bodily harm and even death at the hands of their suffering debtors. But neither the most stringent laws nor the most vehement religious exhortations could restrain the influence of money accumulated in private hands. If Jews attained to pre-eminence in this particular department of trade, this was due not to their special original aptitude for such business, but because, shut out from the land and regarded with detestation

in other walks of life, they, with their close racial connection in all countries, were driven to money-lending and general financial operations if they wished to increase their wealth. Yet though private vengeance has often been wrought upon Jews and their competitors in usury, especially in agricultural countries, the ancient and world-wide antagonism between debtors and creditors has never, in modern history, resulted in such social revolutions as previously recorded. In spite of the legislation against usury on the one hand, and the attempts of the courts at times to prevent the creditors from obtaining their pound of flesh, the actual position of the debtor was exceedingly bad in all civilised countries. So far from the law preventing usury, it swelled the rates demanded for accommodation on account of the presumed risk on the one hand, and treated the debtors as virtual criminals on the other. Thus from first to last no law, no ethic, no religion could prevail. The fathers of the Church were as incapable of restricting usury by their denunciations as the pagan philosophers of old or the futile moralists of to-day. Legislators and ecclesiastics alike found money in the form of usury uncontrollable in its operations. So late as 1854 usury laws were still on the English Statute Book, while debtors could nevertheless be imprisoned by the usurers for the non-payment of debts incurred. So difficult is it to relieve mankind from this form of pecuniary oppression.

But why is it that usury and the trading upon the necessities of others is regarded at the present time with little of the obloquy which attached to it throughout antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and even comparatively recently in modern times? Because the bulk of such transactions take the shape of a participation in the profits derived from the exploitation of labour, and consequently only lending which takes the obnoxious shape and savour of fraud is regarded as in any way nefarious. Usury, in fact, has become almost a negligible factor in modern financial economy, when contrasted with the vast returns derived from the "legitimate gains" of money capital embarked in industrial enterprise—gains which far transcend in good times any direct usury ever extracted from borrowers.

## CHAPTER XIV

## ECONOMIC BACKWATERS: PERU

The immense antiquity of man on the planet and the enormous periods traversed in his development from the lowest grades of human society to the first stages of ordered communism have only been understood within the last generation. Many hundreds of thousands of years are now accepted as the lowest estimate of the time that our ancestors occupied in attaining to existing civilisation, which itself is now seen to be only the beginning, not the end, of human progress in society. Consequently even the oldest forms of ancient governments, reaching back as in Babylon, in China, or Egypt, many thousands of years, are now recognised as comparatively quite modern. The period, which can only be faintly realised from the buildings, tools, weapons, decorations, mounds and refuse heaps that have been discovered, is far more important and much longer than the ages in which we can discover, from sculptures, inscriptions and hieroglyphics on monuments, and then from definite records, what were the institutions as well as the habits and customs, tools, machines, metals and general social arrangements of our less remote forbears.

The most remarkable thing is that since palæolithic man spread all over the globe, probably from one centre, throughout the world, man has pursued the same course of social growth. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that we should find the same, or almost precisely similar, monuments on every continent and even in certain islands. These islands, though now divided from any mainland by thousands of miles of sea, were quite possibly connected with it at the time when these monuments were constructed by men in at least the higher stage of barbarism, who seem to have been replaced by a set of truculent and bloodthirsty savages. If the evolution of the theory of relationships is world-wide, then manifestly the forms of marriage out of which those relationships grew, and the communal systems

accompanying them, were likewise world-wide. Yet these communal societies do not always take the same shape when they constitute the social arrangements of the same race. Local conditions modify the methods by which they supply their wants, and peoples of the like lineage may be simultaneously engaged in pastoral life, or in agriculture, or even in hunting and fishing, as their main means of gaining a livelihood, according to the climate and nature of the country where the different portions of the same tribe which had reached the like level of social status were settled. That, of course, is only to say that surroundings influence methods of production, just as methods of production adapt themselves in great part to surroundings. Consequently there arise variations in the social relations themselves, due not to changes in the power of the groups over Nature herself, but to the different character of the natural conditions—that must perforce be dealt with.

When, also, a certain stage of communistic barbarism, or even civilisation, has been attained, the same forms may be maintained for thousands of years, without any social upheaval or serious modification of social structure. This although changes and improvements may have been made in the methods of production. It is one of the most interesting features in the conditions of America, prior to the arrival of Columbus, that nowhere had the stage of civilisation, based upon the various categories of private property, been reached. Savage tribes had butchered and eaten peaceful barbarian peoples of a higher level of social evolution, and in turn the more highly organised communists conquered the man-eating communists who elsewhere had been the victors. But the original societies thus indulging in mutual antagonisms, whether brutal cannibals or more refined tribes under theocratic chiefdom, were all in the communal period. Moreover, the huge buildings scattered through North and South America show that the inhabitants of these various districts had attained to what is now called the megalithic age, similar relics of which are to be found in all parts of the world, thus showing once again that different branches of mankind everywhere passed, unconsciously and without any possibility, in the case of America at least of imitation, through identically the same evolution. Monuments cannot be mistaken for accidental natural phenomena.

Whatever may be the real history of the vast ruins of Tiahuanoco and their abandonment, the Peruvians, ruled by the Incas, furnish, unquestionably, the largest and most complete example of communistic arrangements, under the domination of hereditary theocratic chieftainship, known within the historic period. Mexico was quite as remarkable a nation as Peru. But there the ferocious Aztecs, with their widespread cannibalism and frightful religious orgies of bloodshed, though still cherishing many of the early and gentile communal forms, showed no such scheme of organised labour as could be found in Peru. Therefore, as the widest application of theocratic or State communism, Peru is worthy of closer study from the socialist standpoint than has yet been given to it. We are dependent upon Garcilasso da Vega, himself an Inca through his mother, the monk Cieza and Prescott's invaluable excerpts from the MS. records, which he read in the Spanish archives in Madrid, for all we know of Peruvian institutions, beyond what can be derived from tradition and the monuments. The general impression is that the Incas administered a mild and beneficent regime which had endured, at the outside, for four hundred years, from the founder of the dynasty, Manco Capac (who taught the people all the trades and arts and tillage they practised), through twelve successive Incas down to the Spanish invasion.

Obviously, this is too absurdly short a time to account for the existence of such an elaborate and well-wrought social system as that which had its centre in Cuzco and extended over an immense area, embracing many climates and the most diverse soils. Manco Capac was, of course, merely the traditional heaven-born benefactor, the child of the Sun God, who, in reality, was represented by generations of human evolution extending over thousands of years. Peru showed a high grade of communal barbarism, with almost scientific knowledge of agriculture, which must have grown up from an immense antiquity. Moreover, the acquiescence of millions of Peruvians in the ordinances decreed for them and the confidence the original stock displayed in the sacred and beneficent character of the administration points to a very long persistence of Inca rule—a persistence immensely exceeding the short space of time accorded to it by Garcilasso da Vega and his authorities.

However this may be, all Spanish accounts agree with

Garcilasso and other almost contemporary writers as to the wonderfully successful organisation of the Inca State. All likewise concur in the view that there was no direct personal slavery, or man-ownership, of any kind, and that the mass of the people did not know what real poverty was. Below the level of the Incas of the blood royal, and the nobility who had special advantages, the general body of workers were free from all anxiety as to their sustenance and general well-being. This fact is certified by Cieza de Leon, who is regarded by all authorities as quite the most reliable Spanish writer on Peruvian institutions. He travelled several thousand miles through the country, examining closely into various departments of the production and distribution of food, the duties of the inhabitants and the methods of administration. He is frequently quoted by the Inca, Garcilasso da Vega, as thoroughly trustworthy. Nor has this ever been disputed. Allowing that Garcilasso himself is apt to exaggerate the good qualities and to overrate the character of the rule of his own relations, the following statements seem irrefragably established:—

1. All the inhabitants of Peru, male and female, young and old, below a certain grade, were called upon to serve in the various industries and on general public works.

2. Their produce, whether agricultural or manufactured, was divided into three parts, one for the Inca and the Inca's relations, one for the Sun temples and the priests, and one for themselves. But the proportion for the Incas and for the temples were largely stored, and could be and were drawn upon in times of scarcity.

Here, then, by universal admission, we have a society capable of the tillage and manuring of land to such a high degree of efficiency that its members were all well supplied with food of a kind adequate to fit them, not only for the most arduous works of peace, but for great vigour and endurance in war.

The system of irrigation—regard being had to the mechanical means at their disposal and the natural difficulties to be surmounted—is looked upon with admiration by the ablest hydraulic engineers of our own time. Terraces upon terraces of cultivated land, watered by their ingenuity, rose one above the other to the snow level, in districts where modern peoples would scarcely attempt to grow any artificial crops. Evidence of

Peruvian proficiency and success in this respect remains to this day. Of their strictly scientific system of manuring from various sources, also, there is no doubt whatever. What a high level of agricultural skill must they not have reached when they went off in their little miserable raft-like *balsas*—the Peruvians, unlike the Polynesians, had no canoes, large or small—in order to fetch as much of guano from the Chincha Islands and elsewhere as their petty vessels could carry! Their admitted preservation of the birds which gave them this valuable means of soil enrichment displays an amount of forethought and calculation which too often are lacking in civilised communities.

Their methods of cultivation seem, in fact, to have been wellnigh perfect, when we remember their inferior implements; and, where the soil and climate varied, they appear to have modified their methods of production to meet the changed conditions—showing an indispensable, but none the less remarkable capacity of dealing with natural phenomena in an empire which was thousands of miles in length. They possessed but one source of tame animal supply, the llamas, vicunas and alpacas, which belonged nominally to the Incas, and were tended by shepherds from the general community as part of the social service of themselves and their families. But the wool of the llamas was nevertheless as much at the disposal of the whole of this Peruvian society as that of the wild flocks feeding on the mountains, killed down once every four years, or as the fibres obtained by cultivation in the fields or from natural growths. The distribution of wool from the herds was just as carefully managed, since the clip was regularly shared for weaving into woollen cloth for the use of the people, as well as of the privileged minority. Their processes of weaving were themselves admirable. In other directions the Peruvians showed an amount of artistic culture which has not often been displayed by private property civilisation. Not only were the villagers well housed in proportion to their needs—overcrowding in town or country being apparently unknown, owing to the ease with which decent houses were erected, surrounded by adequate land for the tillage of their inhabitants—but stupendous buildings of great magnificence, decorated profusely with gold and furnished with superb golden vessels, were erected for the churches of the Sun God and the palaces of the Incas.

The ruins of these imposing structures remain to this day to confirm the statements of the Spanish conquerors. How such enormous blocks of stone were conveyed long distances from their quarries, were then rough-hewn, finished, set in place and, where necessary, clamped together with copper bands, remains still a cause of amazement. It seems certain, however, that, so far as the haulage of these huge blocks was concerned, they were moved over such vast distances by an enormous number of men, with the help of inclined planes and possibly wooden rollers. Speculation, in fact, on this point is set at rest by the well-authenticated tradition that, when one of these enormous stones was being hauled and pushed up to Cuzco the tackle broke, the stone descended the declivity up which it had been dragged, and some three thousand men lost their lives in consequence. But the setting and polishing of these masses of stone were as remarkable as their conveyance. So close did they fit into one another that, both being highly polished on the nearest face, a reciprocal action was set up between the blocks on either side which even to-day renders it impossible to insert the blade of a knife between them. Copper clamps were evidently only used when such complete contiguity could not be obtained.

Three points are worthy of note with respect to these stones and the abnormally spacious buildings of which they formed part. Though, first, tremendous human strength admirably organised must have been necessary to bring the stones to the place where they were used, there is nothing to show that the men thus employed were treated as slaves and driven to their work under the lash, as in the case of some vast European, African and Asiatic monuments. On the contrary, it is positively stated, and the Spaniards themselves seem to have believed it to be true, that the people who were employed on these and all other public works, architectural and agricultural, performed their duties with great cheerfulness, laughing and singing the whole time. There was no reason why they should do otherwise. Work itself under good conditions of existence, for obvious social advantage, need never be other than exhilarating. It is overwork and excessive strain, enforced for the benefit of others, which is intolerable. The Peruvians did not suffer from this under their theocratic communism.

Then, secondly, we may stand amazed here and in other parts

of North and South America at the great knowledge of architecture and building which the creators of these vast structures must have possessed; and the innumerable experiments which they doubtless made, extending over long epochs of time, before they arrived at such surprising mastery over their materials, shaping them, getting them into place and the like. Here alone we arrive at a conception of what man attained to under communistic barbarism, which should serve to convince us finally that there is nothing whatever in the institution of communism, merely as communism, to prevent mankind, though possessed only of very inferior tools, from providing ample food, clothing and housing by the labour of the whole population from youth to age. This even when a large portion of their produce is deducted for the maintenance of non-productive classes, for warlike purposes, for the erection of great buildings, or the support and arming of relatively large armies. That the Peruvians had a big surplus in each good year of the necessaries of life is, indeed, clear enough, since such large numbers of men could be withdrawn from the working population for the creation of vast public works, destined for defence or display, whose construction occupied long periods. The fact that such structures were raised, as it appears, at the same time that important military expeditions were undertaken and carried out, enforces this contention.

These expeditions were elaborately prepared for by the Incas, as a portion of a deliberate policy of extension of their empire over tribes which had not reached the same status as the Peruvians themselves. Barracks were erected, ready for the housing of the soldiers along the roads by which it was intended to advance to the attack of the populations to be subdued. Moreover—which is very important from the economic standpoint—stores of grain and other necessaries were accumulated close at hand, to provide full sustenance for the soldiers on march and to prevent them from being a burden on the villages in the neighbourhood, either by demanding supplies or by insisting upon accommodation. Thus the theocratic communism had developed into an Imperial communism in the course of centuries. The people who were subdued were neither slaughtered and eaten, nor enslaved. They were, so far as possible, adopted or absorbed into the community or empire of their conquerors,

compelled to worship the Sun, and forced to abandon cannibalism and indulgence in unnatural vice. Historians favourable to the Incas, such as Garcilasso da Vega, all make out that these attacks upon savage tribes were entered upon from purely philanthropic motives, and that the extension of the empire was conducted on the most humane, as it certainly was on the best military, principles. But a less prejudiced survey inevitably suggests that the Peruvian soldiery were by no means so humane in their methods as these writers would have us believe; that the wholesale burning alive of men said to be addicted to unseemly vices, together with their wives, their children and their dwellings, might easily have arisen from the ordinary desire for military vengeance on those who had made a stout resistance, rather than from high moral indignation; and that the high-born and divine royal family, surrounded by a selfish nobility, were naturally inclined to bring into the fold vigorous savages who would furnish their proportion of the tribute to the privileged few. That, however, the Peruvian chieftains did incidentally put an end to cannibalism and abolish human sacrifice among the peoples they subdued, since they had long given up such sacrifices themselves, seems beyond question. Whether cannibalism could have been arbitrarily suppressed, unless simultaneously an equivalent or better diet had been offered, is extremely doubtful.

In at least one instance an attempt thus to soften the manners and customs of tribes attacked on the borders of the empire completely failed. The cannibals, vicious men and fetish-worshippers, having successfully resisted the arms of the Inca, were set down as shameless miscreants, unworthy to share in the blessings of Peruvian domination. When also the powerful tribe of Chancas, which had been recently subjugated, rose against those whom, in spite of their virtues and admirable organisation, they nevertheless regarded as their oppressors, and succeeded in driving the reigning Inca from his capital, the son of the fugitive potentate, who reorganised and led to victory the defeated Peruvian armies, displayed, in the course of his successful reconquest, qualities of heart and head which can scarcely be reconciled with scrupulous philanthropy. But when the Chancas were thoroughly beaten and subdued the dictates of true statesmanship prevailed; and the new Inca, having deposed

his recreant father, permitted his defeated enemies, so it is alleged, to return to their enforced allegiance on the easy terms of sharing in the life of the Peruvian people. Systematic warfare, accompanied by far-seeing generosity to the people who surrendered, was the general policy of the Incas. Where they showed intolerance and cruelty was in dealing with treason in their own royal family or with risings among their own Peruvian chieftains. There they were truculent enough.

But these matters, or even the unspeakable ruthlessness of the Inca Atahualpa towards members of his own family, which did so much to help the Spaniards in their ruffianly sack of Peru, do not affect the social and economic conditions of Peruvian communism. They only show that, as against tribes at a lower stage of development, the Inca Empire of the Sun, under theocratic communism, was as thoroughly organised for war as it was for peace. Peace among the sun-worshipping communists inside; war against the fetish-worshippers outside. The former for economic and social advantage at home, the latter to increase Inca power and prosperity by absorption of other populations abroad.

This highly organised communistic realm had reached a point in its development which might easily have gone much farther. Mining for gold and copper was carried on assiduously and with great success, the workers in the mines, again, being supported by the tillers of the soil, while engaged in extracting metals from the veins. The time taken by the miners to obtain the metals they required scarcely reckoned in the matter. The value of the copper, like the value of the gold, was "a value in use," not "a value in exchange." To us the advantage of gold is that, if individuals, or a set of combined individuals, own enough of it they can virtually buy anything physical, moral or intellectual they desire. Gold which the Peruvians drew from their mines had no more significance in this way than copper; though, of course, they knew very well that the one metal cost much more labour to obtain and refine than the other. Their commerce had not arrived at the point where the precious metals dominated the market, or where exchange in any shape formed an important element in their everyday life. Yet that men should be able to mine for metals to be used for industrial purposes or decoration, while the gold was not at any time exchanged in

order to acquire from without the necessaries of life, shows once more that the amount of food grown in the country, including the proportions allotted to the Incas, the priests, and the nobles, must have been ample for all requirements. That the gold should have been extracted and refined, and the copper smelted, proves likewise that the highest level of barbarism, as distinguished from savagery, had been reached.

But still more remarkable, from some points of view, were the Peruvian bridges. It is not too much to say that the iron suspension bridges which were considered such ingenious devices for nineteenth-century roads — Telford's suspension bridge across the Menai Straits, for example—were virtually anticipated, in all their most important features, by the suspension bridges of osiers thrown by the Peruvians over some of the streams. It is true that, though the structure was provided with battens and stretched to the utmost limit, a descent to the centre and a rise to the other side could not be avoided. But so strong were these osier bridges that armies marched across them to their destination, and they lasted as long as the osiers, of which the chains were composed, remained sound.

Now in all this, as said, there was no direct personal slavery and, if we are to believe the records, no directly enforced toil. But the organisation for securing continuous production from the managers of ten families, in successive multiples of ten upwards through the whole social life, was as complete as can be imagined. Every detail of family life, monogamy being the rule, except for the Incas, was closely watched over and regulated. It was impossible for anybody from infancy onwards to escape from this all-pervading social system. Committees of inspection and methodical suppression from above supplemented the local management. The increase or decrease of numbers in a family was accompanied by proportional changes in the amount of land allotted for tillage, as well as in the size of the dwelling occupied. Although, therefore, we read in the laws that remain to us nothing about flogging, or fines, or torture of any kind for workers or managers or miners or shepherds or agriculturists, we do learn that the punishment of death was decreed not only for grave offences, but for the slightest breach of the numerous and minute regulations which pervaded the entire community. The bare fact of "idleness" incurred the death penalty for the

offender. As idleness may be made to cover a very wide field of petty dereliction of duty, it is easy to see that all the toiling portion of the people might be made the victims of the most revolting tyranny. Probably these harsh enactments were rarely put into practice, and that indeed is generally assumed. But the frequent reference to the crime of sloth is practically a proof that, in the early days of the development of this remarkable society from a far rougher communist savagery, when food was less easily grown, the theocratic chieftains and their priests imposed draconian penalties on the rank and file of the nominally free tribesmen who hankered after a return to a less orderly and strenuous existence, even at the expense of greater uncertainty of a plentiful supply of food. That the later Incas also did not readily tolerate loafers and loungers in their realm may be taken as certain.

As a result of all this remarkable co-ordination, co-operation and regulation for the provision of adequate sustenance, clothing and housing for all, it was impossible for anyone in the various climates of Peru to suffer from scarcity. If crops failed and the ordinary supplies fell short, the wants of the people were fully supplied from the royal and priestly granaries maintained as reserves for that purpose. There was no anxiety at any period of life. Mother and baby, infants of tender age, men and women, the old, the blind, the maimed were all taken care of as a matter of course, and gave in return such reasonable social service as they could. That this service was not excessive is shown by the calculation, which is generally taken as perfectly sound, that two months of labour by the working members of the country sufficed to discharge all their dues to the sacred family of the Inca, numerous though it was, as well as to provide for the service of the temples. Thus it is fairly well established, from many points of view, that the Peruvians, by reason of their strict communal arrangements, and in spite of the theocratic despotism under which they lived, were relieved, by their own exertions, from all the racking cares which render life a long penal servitude for the majority of the wage-earners of civilisation. Work among the communal Peruvians was a joyous service, as narratives of the conquerors relate; it has long ceased to be such in the great industrial centres of private property. That Peruvian work was not toilsome is admitted by the most careful students of Peruvian

economic and social records. The carking anxiety which pervades so many households, year in and year out, under civilisation was unknown. If life was not to the few a propitious gamble in which luck, or cunning, or unscrupulous financial capacity secured for the possessors of these advantages economic domination over their fellows, it was not for the many one perpetual strife against adverse conditions which they could not hope to overcome.

What, then, were the drawbacks to the Peruvian communism which counterbalanced the social security and confidence in the future that were common to all? In order to obtain the certitude of comfortable well-being the great mass of the population was compelled to devote itself to work upon lines imposed from above. There was practically no possibility of rising into a higher social status for those who were born into the humble ranks. The workers had no direct control over the arrangements made for their own welfare. Soldiers, drawn from the workers, were compelled to risk life and limb in wars which were no concern whatever of theirs. Lastly, they constituted part of a society in which no initiative was possible for them except with the consent of those above.

All the disadvantages enumerated exist in a much more acute shape in the social systems of our day. But the absence of initiative for the entire community is the point upon which critics chiefly insist. This also is true of every civilised state from chattel slavery to wage slavery, especially in the latest stage of growth.

There is, however, nothing to show that the Inca communism of Peru was a stereotyped, unprogressive society. Nor is there any reason why it should have been so. Man, relieved from the harassing need of the daily provision of a doubtful supply of sustenance, has always been an inventive animal. How otherwise could human beings have mounted upwards to the tool-using and nature-controlling position in which even the lower communism was practised? That the bringing to perfection of each rough idea of improvement took a long time, possibly many successive generations, only affects the rate of progress. And we often forget that some of the most ingenious discoveries, inventions, machines and contrivances of fully developed capitalist civilisation took a long time before they were adapted

to ordinary social use. Nay, in at least one instance, the hapless inventor was immolated by the conservative workers of his own epoch, who, naturally enough, as we can now admit, failed to discern how the mechanical cheapening of the output of their commodities could possibly benefit them or their progeny.

But there is more direct evidence than this abstract argument to prove that Peruvian communism was not stationary. Here tradition and actual experience come in to confirm the ideas of probable hypothesis. The great stone buildings to which reference has been made, both anterior to and during Inca supremacy, had obviously not existed from all time. They were thought of, experimented upon and carried out during the communist epoch. Here was a most remarkable instance of unconscious invention of world-wide application; and Peru was passing through the same experience that man in society traversed almost everywhere else. But the great osier suspension bridges seem to me to settle the question against those who maintain that this communism had no initiative. There was no necessity for their construction after the elaborate fashion described by the historians of Peru, with the two ends of the osier cables deeply embedded and anchored on either side of the ravine or river to be bridged, so long as the Peruvian communists remained within their original limits. So soon, however, as they began to expand their Inca empire beyond these borders, and encountered these obstacles to rapid progress, they gave up the laborious task of descending and climbing out of the cañons, or crossing the rivers in their precarious *balsas*, or hitching these rafts on to a thick rope to be swept from one side to the other by the action of the current—itself an ingenious device for barbarism—and adopted the suspension bridges paved with battens, which became part and parcel of the great roads. We may contend, therefore, from what we can learn of all the circumstances, that the assumption that permanent arrest of all further development was an inevitable consequence of this elaborate communism *is* an assumption, and nothing more.

Without, therefore, in any way exaggerating the benefits derived by the people from the communism of the Incas, or minimising the harmful effects of irresponsible theocracy, and economic and social relations scrupulously regulated from above, it cannot be disputed that in this realm of the Incas of Peru we

had a society where millions of human beings were in such a position that—

1. They were assured from birth to death against lack of food, want of necessary and suitable clothing, and were always provided with healthy and adequate house-room.

2. They obtained these essentials of existence by moderate labour on the land, which was intensively cultivated and capably manured, as well as by the application of skilled labour in manufacture and building.

3. They carried on these necessary labours without resorting to any form of individual personal slavery.

4. They were not driven to their tasks or tortured in order to exact from them excessive toil, though idleness and breaches of the laws could be punished with death.

5. They lived in harmony with one another and astonished the ruthless and butchering Spaniards who conquered them by their mild manners.

6. They possessed small means of production in comparison with the huge powers of modern civilisation; but they could nevertheless, by the general social work of all, construct vast edifices, bridge considerable streams, establish a highly scientific system of irrigation, mine, refine and smelt metals for their use, and to develop a system of agriculture which in some respects anticipated the most scientific cultivation of modern times.

7. They were so well organised for war that they conquered and absorbed numerous neighbouring tribes, and persuaded them to give up their savage customs, and live peacefully under Inca rule.

8. They maintained this social organisation of communal production and distribution, on an ascending scale of efficiency, according to all probability for thousands, not hundreds, of years before the invasion of the Spaniards.

9. They displayed ingenuity and initiative in solving agricultural, manufacturing and engineering problems quite on a par with modern achievement, when account is taken of the inferior tools and appliances which alone were at their disposal.

10. They kept up a powerful and highly disciplined army without inflicting any excessive charge upon the general population.

11. They constructed excellent roads throughout their dominions and provided post-houses and barracks for troops along their great main routes.

12. They exhibited artistic and decorative faculties of a very high order, and were far superior to their ruffianly Spanish conquerors in the politeness and decencies of ordinary life.

What the mass of Peruvians lacked, as parts of a huge machine extending for three thousand miles along the Pacific coast of South America, was that individual liberty to which we rightly attach so much importance. But this is nowhere attained under capitalism, and can never be achieved by mankind until they collectively and communally control those enormous powers of producing and distributing wealth unconsciously inherited from their predecessors and now used by the minority to dominate them. What the communist empire of Peru, however, shows more clearly than the small tribal organisation at any stage of its development is, that the provision of sufficient, not to say abundant, food, clothing, housing and leisure was an easy matter for a great collection of human beings whose powers to create and distribute wealth were infinitely inferior to our own.

## CHAPTER XV

## ECONOMIC BACKWATERS: CHINA

In Peru a society, dependent upon theocratic domination above, and communal production and distribution below, provided general well-being for the mass of a large population living under widely different conditions of climate and soil. This system, as already suggested, lasted, if we are to judge by the vast periods traversed in other parts of the world in the transition from one stage of society to another, an immensely longer time than has been generally assumed. Long duration of social arrangements once established seems the invariable rule under any form of communism.

In China, under a merely nominal theocracy as compared with that of the Incas of Peru, we have, on the contrary, an example of the amazing longevity of a system of free and independent farmers with their small private properties in land. Yet the land of China was in all probability first devoted, by the same race which now occupies its spacious territory, to tillage under complete or modified communism. There is every reason to believe, that is to say, that Chinese society went through the same or very similar stages of social development which were traversed by mankind in other parts of the world. For, notwithstanding the intensely individual character of private property in land and small handicraft which prevails in the China of our day, there exist still survivals of the "clans," with the remains of usages obviously derived from a series of village communities, such as have existed for centuries in India and in every other civilised country.

As these tribal relations and communal forms still subsist as mere vestiges of former social states, so the next stage of human development, slavery, though having long since ceased to be the dominant productive force of Chinese society, still lingers on in a decadent form, bearing witness in its slow disappearance to what had formerly been an almost universal institution. But

however these previous social arrangements may have developed in the remote past, until the age of private property was reached, it is certain that the cultivation of land in the shape of private ownership, to some extent modified by ancient communal usages, and throughout accompanied by elaborate ancestor worship, has endured in China with little variation for very many hundreds of years. It is one of the misfortunes of Chinese history, as hitherto expounded to students in the West by Europeans who have carefully observed and written about China and her people, that most of these authorities have endeavoured to fit their calculations as to the antiquity of the country and the development of its civilisation within the limits of the Mosaic chronology. This, of course, is quite fatal to the formation of any adequate conception of what really occurred, by a hopeless restriction of the time necessary to account for the social evolution that has manifestly taken place. It is greatly to be regretted, as the able French writer, M. Letourneau, says, that some portion of the laborious study devoted to the origins of Greek and Roman civilisation has not been given to the early growth of China and the development of her successive institutions. Still more regrettable was the vanity of the Mongol emperor, at the foundation of his dynasty, which entailed the destruction of many early records and annals that might have provided clues to the solution of the problems of the various stages of Chinese history. But, even without such direct information of an earlier day, it is certain that the discoveries and inventions of the Chinese of old time, wonderful as they were, could not by any possibility have been rushed through and brought into common usage within the length of time ordinarily apportioned to their development.

It is the fashion to consider the annals of Confucius, so far as they relate to the two thousand years before his lifetime, as purely mythical; though, had they been so, it is unlikely that the brilliant and cynical commentator who followed him would have failed to hint that they had no foundation. But even assuming them to be myths in the strict historical sense, modern research has shown us clearly in other directions that myths and traditions of prehistoric periods have a definite material foundation, which can be dug down to and realised by comparison with similar social growths elsewhere. Thus it now appears that the

probable date of the actual settlement of China by the same race which now inhabits that vast scope of territory cannot be traced. No traditions of immigration are to be found beyond the conception of "the Hundred Families" who occupied the country at a period so infinitely remote that many thousands of years scarcely cover the probable date of their first appearance. It is quite possible that the civilisation of China transcends even that of Egypt in antiquity, and that China was a federation of tribes when Sargon I. founded Babylon. It is impossible to reconcile the evolution of such an enormously populous empire or state as China, possessing for hundreds of years the same written and printed language, with most elaborate characters, which practically all the inhabitants read and understand; having an extensive pottery and porcelain establishment under the management of a high official some four thousand years ago; anticipating Europe in the art of printing, in the discovery and application of the mariner's compass, as well as in the manufacture and use of gunpowder, and possessing long-established native commerce and banks, a network of irrigation works and navigable canals, with any chronological calculations hitherto propounded. Yet we are still too apt to treat the countless generations which led up to the consolidation of ancient China into an established and civilised community, not very markedly different from that we see now, as if all that occurred during this great sweep of time were purely mythical. When the Chow dynasty was established, within the historical epoch, and China was undoubtedly a civilised country, Egypt and Assyria were powerful empires. Athens, Thebes, Sparta, Tyre and Carthage were growing little communities. Rome was not founded. Solomon had not built his temple. We may almost sum up this marvellous continuity of civilised longevity with "China was, China is, China will be!"

Assuming, as now seems certain, that man has passed through the same or exceedingly similar stages of social evolution, representing in turn peaceable or forcible revolutions, it is clear that the epochs known to the Chinese under the names of prehistoric emperors or tribal leaders covered vast periods of time: how vast we cannot at present determine. The statement that one of these now legendary benefactors of his race instituted astronomical calculations, and worked out a whole system of

divisions of time, merely tells us that the Chinese, early in their comparatively settled condition, had arrived, by protracted observation of the sun and moon and stars, at the same conclusions as were being slowly reached elsewhere. Again, when we are told that another personage of superhuman sagacity transformed the records of the events of his reign from perishable knot-memorials in lengths of cord, after the manner of the Peruvians, into the generally intelligible hieroglyphical characters which constitute the basis of Chinese written language to-day, all within his own lifetime, we know that we have here a shorthand summary of the gradual and long drawn-out experiments which eventually resulted in Chinese printing as we see it to-day. Such a crucial transition as this marks, obviously, a special stage in the long process of evolution, through which the tribes or clans distributed over the great territory of our own time were so far confederated and "civilised" that they regarded themselves as one people, and accepted a common written and previously a common spoken language.

Prior to this another personage, also figured forth as an emperor, performed the remarkable feat of inducing his subjects to give up entirely their nomadic existence as hunters and fishers, with merely incidental tillage, and enter upon stabilised agriculture with a common centre; having at the same time placed at their disposal tame animals of different useful kinds, as well as the various appliances of the husbandry of seed-planting and foresight. This astounding record of progress was achieved within the emperor's own exaggerated Imperial existence of some one hundred and fifteen years. The story itself is, of course, as mythical and legendary as the tales of Prometheus, Numa or Manco Capac. Nevertheless, we have here an unmistakable description, in brief, of the great inevitable transition of a people from wandering hordes, dependent upon chance supplies of food obtained with great effort, to the possession of flocks and herds of tame animals and thence to partial, followed by regular and persistent, agricultural cultivation—the growth, in fact, of the ancestors of the present Chinese people from savagery to barbarism, from barbarism to the higher barbarism of confederate gentile tribes, and thence onwards to the lower forms of civilisation.

So, likewise, with the changes effected by yet a fourth poten-

tate, more remote and nebulous still, who guided the denizens of the neolithic age of unrecorded and unnumbered centuries from the use of stone implements to the employment of those of bronze, and thence to those of iron, when that metal gained final supremacy over both bronze and stone for tools and weapons. Here we have again a rough conspectus of the traditional, unverified and so far unverifiable memorials of industrial, economic and social changes; accompanied by the alteration of the law of descent from the matriarchal to the patriarchal form, a change traditionally effected by the semi-divine powers of four exceptional rulers, who really represent immensely long periods in the evolution of this remarkable people.

There is another point, not of a directly economic character, which gives the impression of almost incalculable antiquity in Chinese civilisation. In nearly all races which have occupied the same scope of land for a long period, without displacement by conquest and immigration of races from without, some tradition or ceremonial observance having relation to cannibalism may be traced. Nothing of the kind is to be found among the Chinese themselves; though the leaders of the Turcoman hordes, with their festal cups made out of the skulls of their enemies, elaborately decorated, provide evidence that the invaders of China had probably been addicted to the consumption of human flesh. This absence of any trace of ancient cannibalism in China is the more remarkable since, as already observed, relics of gentile organisation are still to be found in Chinese towns and villages. And where gentile relationship and matriarchal descent have prevailed in other parts of the world, there vestiges of ancient cannibalism are almost invariably to be found. That "the hundred families," assumed by Chinese writers to have founded their kingdom at an immensely remote date, were not cannibals seems, therefore, most probable. But, in default of such records as have been found in Egypt and elsewhere, all attempts to reconstruct accurately the growth of prehistoric China from savagery to barbarism must be abandoned; and we can only rely upon the probabilities suggested by traditions and the practically invariable sequence of development in other countries.

When, however, we come to the feudal period, which played a great part in Chinese history, we arrive at records and descrip-

tions which enable us to be practically certain that this great epoch must have been preceded in China, as elsewhere, by tribal and individual slavery, developing into nobility and serfdom. The great lords of China, like the powerful feudal chiefs of Japan and Western China, were engaged in constant warfare with one another, and resorted to all the ruffianism, cruelty and treachery which has distinguished this caste throughout the planet where civilisation has reached that stage. We have in China, in fact, further clear proof in the annals of Confucius, commented upon by his editor, Tso, that here, too, the wholly unconscious and socially uncontrollable growth of man in society follows certain well-defined lines, though the time prescribed by material conditions may be longer or shorter in different regions. In China the feudal period endured for many centuries and entailed upon the inhabitants endless troubles.

The Chow dynasty, which lasted nearly nine hundred years (1112 to 249 B.C.), was itself, apparently, only the most important line of many rulers who carried on intestine strife, independent of the central authority assumed to be controlling them. Not until the downfall of the Chow family and the rise of Si-Whang-Ti, of the short-lived Tsin dynasty, did China become in any sense a consolidated Imperial state. This monarch subdued all his rival princelets, defeated the Tartar hordes which had been pursuing their accustomed business of slaughter and rapine with exceptional success, during the latter part of the Chow rule, built the Great Wall to check further Tartar invasions, and played in China, with respect to the feudalism of the great chieftains, a similar part to that performed very many centuries later by Louis XI. in France. But Tartar invasions from the west and north were ever the bane of the Empire. The Chinese reckon that there have been no fewer than twenty-two such invasions, many of which ended in establishing Tartar dynasties on the throne. How it came about that the Chinese race, which had shown such great courage and capacity in their battles among themselves during the entire feudal period, and had also been able to overcome the Tartars under their native monarchs and generals, endured these invasions is not easy to decide. But certainly, notwithstanding the great energy and fighting capacity they displayed under the leadership of the famous Chinese Buddhist priest who founded the native Ming

dynasty, they gradually became the most pacific people on earth, and regarded a soldier almost as a pariah. It was this spirit which enabled the Manchus, who had aided the descendants of the Ming emperors against other Tartars, to establish themselves on the throne from which they have been recently displaced.

Revolutions in China, until within the last hundred years, have, so far as is known, taken the shape of revolts against Tartar rule. Yet we may be sure that the overthrow of feudalism and the permanent settlement of the overwhelming majority of Chinese families as free cultivators on their own plots of land were not brought about without a long struggle and probably much bloodshed. But these risings against the Tartars, successful or unsuccessful, and even the details of the economic and social struggle which secured the mass of the people ownership of their own soil and the right to cultivate it, are not so important as the fact that the Chinese, owing to their far superior civilisation and power of administration, were able to maintain peacefully their own system of government under all intruders and, by degrees, almost to absorb their own conquerors.

Why this people, who so far anticipated Western Europe in many directions, who developed commerce, banks and trade generally, and displayed capacity in so many departments, with a disposition to peaceful emigration, whose settlements have been traced on the east coast of Africa—why the Chinese should have ceased to progress in the European sense, or to carry further those inventions and discoveries which placed their forefathers ahead of the white peoples, seems impossible to determine. They reached a certain point, and there they remained until contact with the highly developed civilisation of Western Europe has started them afresh on the lines of economic, social and political development, as the same contact had previously, and more rapidly, influenced Japan.

It is easy, however, to discern and understand what has maintained China and the Chinese for so many centuries on a low plane of personal well-being and has secured for them such prolonged ages of internal peace. All may be summed up in their devotion to agriculture on a small scale, with direct personal ownership of the soil they cultivate; the continuance of handicraft; the partial influence of the customs of the old village

communities; the permanent sanctity of family life; deference to the father and the elders of the community, in spite of the somewhat onerous ties thus imposed; the ancestor-worship and reverence for the dead which has prevailed under every form of religion, indigenous or imported; the simple and to the Chinese quite sufficient system of the ethics and directions of Confucius —all these, taken together and handed on from generation to generation, have had a remarkably conservative influence. The maintenance of agriculture and its fostering as the basis of all prosperity, and by far the most important national industry and business, were the foundation of the whole life of the people. This was the view of one of the great invading Emperors. He took care to enforce it by enactment and decree, and his policy was followed by his successors. Trade, though never directly interfered with, was long officially discouraged, and the accumulation of riches in few hands was as far as possible prevented. Mining for the precious metals and precious stones was not only hampered by Imperial disapproval, but was rendered a punishable offence under Imperial decree. This was avowedly done in order to prevent waste of labour upon what was regarded from on high as an unprofitable and even injurious expenditure of force. Thus the extremest views of the French physiocrats of the eighteenth century, as to the supreme position of agriculture, were held and enforced upon their subjects centuries before by Chinese Emperors and their advisers.

Their stringent laws on this head, though of course frequently evaded, produced, in the main, the effect intended by ordinance from above, to an extent and for a length of time that could scarcely have been anticipated. It is, indeed, an exceptional example of what may be done by Government interference exercised among a peaceful, law-abiding people. By unremitting labour, by the use of human sources of fertilisation which prevented the exhaustion of the soil, by assiduous family service, they have preserved their social system unchanged for centuries. Prices were kept low by decree, and by the refusal to permit an expensive currency. There has been no stereotyped caste nor dominant ancestral priesthood in China. Local institutions have been little modified. Education has been and is common to all. Foreigners, unless and until they made themselves politically or socially obnoxious, were welcomed—Marco

Polo's father was made a viceroy; the Jesuits, so long as they confined themselves to promulgating their religion, were most favourably treated. The highest administrative positions were open to the lowest in the land through examinations. Assuredly we have here a system of society which might compare favourably with that of any civilised nation at any period.

Incidentally it may be observed that the economic foundation was and is, to all intents and purposes, the same as that of India. Nevertheless the difference in the superstructure of the two great empires is astonishing. There can be no real comparison between them. Yet in neither has there been any serious social revolution for hundreds of years. The bearing of this fact upon a famous theory of sociological determinism, much discussed of late, which an active school of thinkers and writers claim solves all the great problems of historic evolution, will be seen later.

The most important attempt at revolution in China in modern times began in 1850, and was known as the Tai-ping rebellion. This great revolt, though generally regarded as an upheaval directed against the Manchu dynasty for the purpose of again establishing a native Chinese dynasty—such as the Ming, which was replaced by the Manchus in 1643—had also other objects in view. That they were entirely hostile to the Manchu Government of Peking, and from the first discarded the queue, the special symbol of Chinese subjection, enforced upon Chinese males by the Tartar Emperors, shows that social as well as religious ideas were bound up with the movement. In fact there seems good reason to believe that the Chinese in at least two of the greatest provinces were desirous of a complete change of their system of government, which should lead to a new development of a progressive character. Having lain so long on one side, they thought it might be well to turn over and lie upon the other—a phenomenon which had possibly occurred before, and stirred all Asia, at previous epochs in Chinese history. It is at least improbable that any new religion, such as that attributed to the schoolmaster Hung-Siu-Chuen, could by itself have produced the tremendous effect of the Tai-ping rising. That Hung, the leader, should have claimed a semi-divine character and have propounded doctrines more in accordance with the old Buddhist teachings than with their corruption in modern times

is quite in accordance with the course that socio-supernatural propaganda takes not only in Asia but in Europe also. On the other hand, it is almost inconceivable that he should have tried to induce the Chinese to adopt any form of Christianity, this religion having always been very unpopular in China, since the Catholics tried to turn the legitimate influence gained by the Jesuit doctors and men of science to political ends. In any event, the people were ready for a desperate effort against Tartar rule and against certain worn-out institutions, while religious enthusiasm, combined with patriotism and an impatient yearning for change unknown in China for generations, made the Tai-ping rebellion exceedingly formidable. The discontent of all the long years of quiescence was concentrated in the attempt at a complete revolution led by Hung and supported by some able generals. We have never yet had a clear account of this powerful national movement, which, beginning its serious attack under arms in 1852, was for some time one long succession of victories and conquests. Sweeping down the valley of the Yang-tse-Kiang and capturing the great city of Nanking, the rebellion gathered nearly the whole of Southern China behind it, and for twelve whole years threatened to overthrow altogether the existing government and to set on foot a new, and probably more enlightened, rule. In this, without foreign intervention, they would probably have succeeded.

Most unfortunately, as it must now seem to any unprejudiced observer, the Europeans in China, and in particular the famous but ignorant and fanatical General Gordon, thought proper to take the part of the Manchu Emperor and his degraded foreign Court against the Chinese patriots who were striving for the emancipation of their country, for better conditions of life for themselves and their people, and for a religion which the white men themselves thought was a form of Christianity. Gordon's "Ever-Victorious Army," manned by Chinese but officered by English officers, with some help from the French, achieved the glory, in 1864, after the Tai-pings had conquered fifteen out of eighteen provinces, and had prepared the way for a final triumph, of reimposing the despotic authority of the Manchus upon China for nearly fifty years. However ruthless the Tai-pings may have been in their day of success, that was the affair of their own countrymen. It was assuredly not the business of English

and Scottish military men to devote themselves to obtaining victory for the Manchus or for the butcherly Chinese viceroy, Li-Hung-Chang, who, despite Gordon's personal guarantee of the safety of their lives if they surrendered, massacred and tortured to death the Scottish general's prisoners in cold blood. It has been estimated that, in the course of this great civil war, some twenty millions of Chinese were slaughtered during and after the period of hostilities, extending over twelve years. The Chinese people gained nothing by the defeat of the Tai-pings: the Manchus alone benefited. It is one of the small ironies of history that "Chinese Gordon" was really "Manchu Gordon."

Probably the greatest single event in the thousands of years of the annals of the Middle Kingdom, and perhaps of all Asia, was the defeat of the Chinese armies by Japan in 1894-1895. Directly and indirectly it was the immediate cause of the great Chinese Revolution. European influences had revolutionised feudal Japan: European influences, acting through Japan, were now to revolutionise the great Empire whose teachers had civilised the Japanese centuries before. Ideas which all the efforts of merchants, financiers and missionaries from the West had failed to impress permanently upon the rulers and people of China were suddenly forced to fruition by a great defeat. It was owing to her acceptance of these European ideas, of modern education, modern industrialism and, above all, of modern weapons that Japan had been enabled to win with ease in the struggle against China, contrary to the expectations of many European residents in the Chinese Treaty Ports. But for European interference, Japan would have followed the rule of Asiatic conquerors, and her Mikado and his pro-consuls, displacing the Manchu dynasty, would have become masters of peaceful China a quarter of a century ago. Consciousness of the inability of China under existing conditions to resist by herself the growing power of Japan led the Manchu emperor, Huang-Su, to accept "the new learning" and to endeavour to enforce it upon his Chinese subjects. No such extraordinary effort by a ruling monarch to meet the development of a new period and bring about a material, psychological and social revolution had ever been made before. To attempt to carry through a policy of transforming the entire social and political and military life of some four hundred millions of people, edu-

cated and intelligent though they were, by capable initiative from above, was a stupendous task which might well have been considered foredoomed to failure. Yet if the metropolis of China had been situated at Nanking instead of at Peking, had Huang-Su been able to emancipate himself, even by familiar Asiatic methods, from his immediate Manchu surroundings, it is quite possible that this unprecedented experiment would have been successful in the hands of this one reigning emperor.

The Tai-pings, though beaten at last by European organisers —in itself a lesson to China if she could but have read it—had shown, nearly fifty years before, how inimical the vast, purely Chinese provinces of the south and west were to unenlightened despotism from the north; and since then disaffection and desire for a new development had widely, though silently, spread. China as a whole was, therefore, far more ready to embrace a fresh dispensation than was generally understood, when Huang-Su embarked upon his marvellous programme of Imperial reforms which were destined to bring about so terrible a reaction.

But Huang-Su's intellectual comprehension ran ahead of his political and practical judgment. Manchu though he was, he saw what was indispensably necessary for the well-being and even for the safety of the Chinese people, and he set to work at once to put what he knew was essential in theory into immediate operation. The edicts and decrees issued by Huang-Su were undoubtedly designed and calculated to revolutionise China more completely and more rapidly than Japan herself had been transformed. Chinese education, Chinese organisation, Chinese transport, Chinese jurisprudence and the Chinese military system were to be rushed up to the level of the most advanced European nations all at once. At every step Huang-Su took the advice of Kang-Yu-Wei, a Chinese official who had made a special study of the great changes in Japan, but whose views had previously been disregarded. The Emperor grasped them thoroughly and tried to realise them simultaneously. He consequently roused against his entire policy all the reactionary interests, including the two most powerful of all—the Manchu functionaries, Court officials, dependents and their hangers-on, as well as the old Conservative Literati in the upper grades of the Chinese administrative service. It takes one's breath away to read the list of Huang-Su's revolutionary proposals.

New teaching of positive knowledge and European science, new universities, new schools of agriculture, new laws, new courts, new use of old temples, new postal services, new armies, and so on in every direction. Nor was the Emperor content with merely issuing his Imperial decrees, and thus running counter to the Tsung-li Yamen, the principal council of the Empire, and several of China's leading statesmen. He followed up his edicts by the removal of obstacular old officials, and by constant reminders to the viceroys of the provinces that these enactments were to be put in force immediately. The wonder is that the Emperor achieved so much as he did. It is almost impossible, indeed, to exaggerate the effect produced by the issue and publication of these subversive Imperial notifications, through the length and breadth of a vast territory inhabited by 400,000,000 people, nearly all of whom could read and write and took an interest in public affairs. We know by experience how difficult it is, for example, to introduce thorough-going educational reforms in Great Britain even when they have been admitted to be necessary by all the progressive elements in the community. Fifty years have failed to give the people in our island a decent system of education. Not only have Parliament and the mass of the people to be convinced, and their narrow religious prejudices removed, but the greatest obstacle of all, the bureaucratic spirit of official opposition, has to be overcome. It is nothing short of astounding that Huang-Su should have attempted and achieved within a few years so much as he did.

For a second, or perhaps a third, time in the history of China an impetus was given from the throne which deeply affected the whole current of Chinese policy. And there was no organised resistance whatever to Huang-Su's reforming agitation, from the whole of the great southern provinces; notwithstanding the general and justifiable objection of the population to the foreign interlopers who were supposed to be not only favourable to, but the originators of, these subversive schemes. That by itself would serve to show that the people had already been prepared for a great change in their social conditions, by propaganda from a quarter very different from that which is generally associated with Sun-Yat-Sen and his friends.

And then the serious reactionary revolt known as the Boxer Rising, directed against foreigners, favoured by the Empress,

supported by the whole anti-popular Manchu influence, and, it is believed, secretly aided by Russia, arose and spread only in those provinces which were most under Manchu influence. Huang-Su was dethroned and died in prison. But when the full history of China during the past quarter of a century comes to be written he will stand out as one of the very few monarchs who ever risked his own position and life in an honest endeavour to organise a peaceful revolution for the advantage of his people.

The Boxer upheaval of reaction, like the Tai-ping rebellion of progress, was suppressed by foreign intervention, and it was most unfortunate that a course of action, which was possibly justifiable and beneficial in itself, should have been disfigured by many incidents of European greed and barbarity. But the Manchu dynasty did not long survive the occupation of Peking by the allied troops. Upon its dethronement the long-prepared revolution against the Manchus and in favour of all the measures laid down by Huang-Su broke out and took the shape of a federated republic China. What has happened since, before, during and after the war is a matter of recent record. The unfortunate differences between the south and the north have postponed the full realisation of the hopes which grew up on the instalment of the Republic. The increasing menace of Japanese domination, as exemplified in the policy of conquest and repression pursued in Korea, contrary to agreement, together with the annexation of Shantung, its 30,000,000 of inhabitants, important geographical position and immense mineral resources, weighs heavily upon the vast but still militarily unorganised and defenceless Chinese territory. Recent further demands from the same Power greatly alarm Chinese statesmen. Should this Japanese movement be averted by European and American action, then the near future will probably see the most individualist, industrious and conservative nation in the world gradually and peacefully transformed into the greatest co-operative community of all civilised peoples. If, on the other hand, the aggressive Japanese succeed in obtaining control over China, with her overwhelming possibilities of development, the Far East of Asia might become at once a very grave danger to the white civilisations.[1]

[1] The position of China in relation to Japan is dealt with in my *The Awakening of Asia.*

## CHAPTER XVI

## CHAOS

When the great series of successful barbarian invasions began, which extended from the North to the Black Sea, the Roman Empire had ceased to be much more than an elaborate instrument for organised taxation of the most ruthless kind. Rome was no longer the capital in any real sense. The Emperors almost ostentatiously proclaimed themselves absentees. Local and national freedoms were crushed, and the Latin language, in various forms of debasement, was the prevailing tongue throughout this vast dominion. The mass of the cultivators were plunged into poverty by exactions of every kind which they could not successfully resist; while the uncertainty of their position, should they succeed in raising themselves above the general level of want, discouraged progress in every way. Officials were no longer administrators even of a corrupt type; they were, as a rule, nothing better than tax-gathering extortioners. At the same time the roads, both general and local, highroads and district roads together, were falling into ruin, and transport, except by water, was becoming more difficult and costly than ever.

All this escaped notice under a temporarily peaceful ruler, who insisted upon tranquillity and decent honesty within the limits of his jurisdiction. This shows that sufficient means of creating wealth, even under a system of production in transition, still existed, but were dried up at their source by wholesale maladministration and malversation. Raids by barbarians, terrible as they were, proved less ruinous than the entire breakdown of trustworthy government during the intervals of devastation. Universal experience has shown, in all agricultural countries from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, that such territories rapidly recover from the most apparently destructive razzias, when peace and settled rule are restored after the attacks. Only when the process of restoration is hampered by injustice, over-taxation and oppression within does permanent poverty

overwhelm a society mainly composed of cultivators. The barbarians themselves came in as settlers and colonisers as much as conquerors. In some cases this was almost welcome. The Goths, Visigoths, Ostrogoths and the Germanic tribes generally, moved probably by increase of population beyond what their cleared areas would support, and pushed onwards by incursions of other hordes from the East, of which we possess no clear record, continued their attacks, systematically, for more than three centuries and a half before the Empire lay completely at their mercy and open to their full subjugation. Scarcely any section of the vast area covered by the old Roman State was free from their conquering march, though the general success of the Roman army on the battle-field and judicious bribes and subsidies arrested their advance for the time. The amount of these subventions to leaders of the Gothic armies, which were paid with apparent ease in gold by the Emperors at Constantinople, shows that, in the East at least, the marked dearth of the precious metals, which had so thoroughly transformed the basis of production in the West, was not of long endurance. The claim of the Roman Empire to world-wide power, as the defender and organiser of the populations within its boundaries, had been destroyed by the course of events. Its right to rule because it promoted the well-being of its subjects had been challenged by its own action, before the barbarians had proved that civilisation, in its period of preparation for a new outlet, could not resist, either militarily or economically, the inroads of peoples in a lower stage of development.

Periods of relative peace were followed by still more and greater attacks; or else, to make confusion worse confounded, the bands of depredators fell out among themselves, at the same time that they carried on conflict with the Romans, thus introducing the horrors of civil war into the maelstrom of general social disorder. It was the result of one of these intestine struggles that gave Italy, not from Rome but from Ravenna, the only generation of steady and beneficent rule which she had known since the Antonines. The barbarian Theodoric, who, history tells us, though brought up in courts, could not write his own name—a sort of Hyder Ali of the West—so ordered matters in the original portion of the Roman dominions that a new era of prosperity seemed to have dawned for the whole

peninsula. Two hundred thousand fighting men, with their full proportion of women and children, came over the Julian Alps in winter, repeopled a considerable portion of the territory and, under the stern dictatorship of their leader, taught the Italians that an illiterate Goth with his Arian belief might exercise a better influence than the most learned of the orthodox, destitute of the faculty of leading and governing men. But even a man of genius could not permanently control the current of events. As nominal Vice-Emperor of the Master of Constantinople it is wonderful that he achieved what he did. Elsewhere in the West the social and economic chaos went on much as it did before. A steady policy, based upon a sound system of agriculture, may restrain or entirely hold back commercial and monetary growth for generations and even for centuries. But failing the continuance of such conscious pressure from above, the economic development gradually, though very slowly, works its way on.

The decadent Roman Empire was thus the scene of the most remarkable experiment in the history of mankind. This was nothing less than an endeavour to accommodate within its boundaries a great succession of untutored but warlike tribes to a civilisation which it was not for generations within their power to understand or accept. Though the Germanic hordes before and after the struggle between Odoacer and Theodoric and their wonderful irruptions over Gaul and Spain, Italy, Sicily, Africa, the east of Europe and Asia Minor had grown on their own lines, since their life and customs had been described by Cæsar and Tacitus, they were still in the gentile period of development. Their kings and chieftains were the heads of great semi-nomadic communities among whom the relations were based upon blood ties. Their land cultivation and ownership was, in its essence, the limited communism of the village community and the mark. Their tribes possessed slaves and their kings controlled the tribes and confederations of tribes in their war expeditions and acted as their leaders in peace surrounded by the Council of Nobles. But the tribesmen, notwithstanding their personal deference to their rulers, were freemen; and their military discipline was of a very different character from the rigid control exercised over highly paid and highly subsidised troops by successful Roman generals.

It is scarcely surprising that during the long period of confusion, while the organisation of the Roman State was broken up, no satisfactory explanation of the position of the cultivators in the rural districts or of the workers in the towns has ever been given. A full account of the economic and social relations and especially of the lower grades of toilers from the remaining slaves upwards has been rendered more difficult of attainment by the conflict between the Germanic and Latin writers as to the respective influence of Teutonic and Roman institutions throughout Europe. This controversy upon the real meaning of the facts of historic development has been conducted on both sides with a racial rancour which carried with it almost a religious virulence. Even writers of great learning who have gone into the fray destitute of prejudice in favour of either party, and have considered the questions at issue from the standpoint of nations not immediately concerned in the evolution, seem unable to keep clear of a certain partisanship. The antagonism between Roman and Teuton from the fourth and fifth to the ninth and tenth centuries of our era has thus been carried from the field and the farm, the villa and the city of old, into the lecture-rooms and libraries of our own times.

Not until the feudal system was constituted which grew up in, and out of, the welter of disturbance during the intervening centuries, does a distinct and recognisable class of oppressed humanity, answering in any degree to the great slave aggregations of antiquity, appear below the series of personal and property, country and township antagonisms, engendered by the unconscious endeavour to reduce this vast economic and social chaos to some sort of order. But this endeavour, which was general rather than collective, appears to have been essentially a blind and unconscious movement. No guiding intelligence whatever can be discerned from beginning to end. Not even the Catholic Church, which exercised so great a material and semi-supernatural influence, nor the ablest of the civilian statesmen even conceived, or could put into operation a clear policy. The barbarians, who came in to obtain wider scope for their increasing numbers, had a more intelligible idea of what they desired to achieve than the feudal kings and barons with their feudatory chiefs and retainers who constituted the social and economic institutions which succeeded them.

With the infinite complexities of the feudal arrangements we have in this connection nothing to do. They varied greatly in each province of what was once Roman territory, and have little more direct bearing upon the modified forms of slavery and serfdom, which underlay them all, than the different standards of slave-owning existence, in various regions, when Rome was at the height of her power, affected the chattel slaves who were the principal agents of production, rural and urban. Serfs and villeins and peasants were the human instruments upon whose labours the whole superstructure was built.

The actual forms of production remained much what they had been for centuries, or even thousands of years, before. Improvements in agriculture, such as the three-course or two-course system of husbandry, in place of the continuous cropping of the same acreage, somewhat superior ploughs and other tools, and even some improvement of roads connecting the monasteries, as in England, did not change the general methods of cultivation. Nor did they affect the dependence, economic and political, of the towns upon the country, which was so great a change from the supremacy of the cities over the country during the Empire. There was, in fact, no clear modification of the methods of production themselves, either among the cultivators or the artisans, which would account for the alteration in the superstructure. The alterations in the relations between classes above and below were due, not to any marked advances in the command of man over nature, but to the inevitable effort of one form of society to adapt its general arrangements to another form, which, disposing of similar means of production, was itself at another stage of human social development. During this period of complicated resettlement there were local revolts of the downtrodden classes, some recorded, and many more probably of which we possess no account.

There can be no doubt that the more or less communal forms which the invading tribes brought with them into Europe greatly influenced the long stage of development which led up to the establishment of feudalism. The basis of feudalism in the first instance was military tenure and personal relations. But village communities with communal arrangements and the culture of open fields in strips were to be found all over Europe,

below the military tenures and the status of free fighting men. It is not possible to go direct from the Roman institutions of slavery, coloni attached to the soil as serfs, coloni who were not so attached but free after paying their tribute, or the really free workers in country or town. Neither is it possible to connect the Roman villa and its "villicus," or superintendent acting on behalf of the proprietor, with the manor and its lord or his bailiff, any more than we can bridge over the difference between the "college" of Roman artisans and the guilds of the towns in the Middle Ages. Roman law and Roman institutions generally had, however, an increasing influence both before and during the consolidation of Feudalism, as the main social organisation of the time. Slavery in its old form had ceased to be economically advantageous; but, as already said, it had lasted long enough to cast a slur upon the performance of all productive labour.

Coloni, free coloni and actually free farmers were also in such constant fear of all forms of robbery, official and unofficial, that, even when the Roman Empire was still in being, they placed themselves and their property under the control of men of wealth who possessed enough influence, and possibly sufficient retainers, to protect them from absolute ruin. In order to obtain reward for this protection and attach their subordinates personally to themselves, the great landowners insisted upon having the titles of the smaller owners transferred to them. That gave unscrupulous owners absolute power. So heavy did various exactions and demands consequently become that in many districts barbarian invasion was preferred to Roman domination. Landlord protection, in fact, took the form of landlord expropriation wherever this seemed advantageous. Whether Goth, Visigoth or Vandal overcame their own domestic economic and social tyrants was, therefore, of small account to the cultivators if they themselves, the victims in any case, escaped slaughter. The barbarians merely did at a blow what the native landowners and ex-proprietors did by degrees: they proclaimed themselves owners and masters in collective right under their princes and chiefs (who developed in time into monarchs and nobles) of a very large proportion of the conquered territory. Gentile society of kinship merged partially into what remained of the people of Roman descent. Ties of

blood were replaced by ties of personal allegiance to the victorious leaders; by ties of material interest; or by the semi-communal arrangements of the village community passing onwards into the manor. But in all the later stages of this coalesced development which differed considerably in different parts of Europe there was no such thing as absolute individual freedom.

Everyone in the community, from the lowest unfree villein or feudal serf through the various gradations up to the highest noble or king, had his place marked out for him by customs, rights and local arrangements which were stronger than any laws, but were liable to be translated in the interest of the holders of forces at command which were stronger still. Only by slow degrees did the economic and social order make headway against the habitual infractions of beneficial conventions. And this was the case from one end of Europe to the other. The sixth and seventh centuries, which are regarded as the climax of disorder, were little if at all worse for the mass of the people than those which followed. So much of civilisation, in any sense, as survived was confined to the small wealthy class, including the clergy, who were to the full as cruel and unscrupulous in their oppression as the most ignorant and brutal of the lay lords. The temporal power of great possessions sanctified by ecclesiastical privilege, strengthened by the monopoly of legal fraud and the custody of documents, written and retained by themselves, gave the Christian Church an authority over the poor of every grade exceeding that of the lay lords of the soil. Though also they might, for purposes of their own, enjoin emancipation of serfs and villeins upon others and maintain a right of asylum within their sanctuaries, none were so slow to recognise the freedom of men on their own properties as the heads of organised Catholicism in those troubled times.

The serfs and villeins, consequently, had less protection against unendurable tyranny than their immediate forbears the slaves under the later Roman emperors. But when the whole of this long epoch is surveyed from the gradual cessation of the Germanic invasions, the permanent settlement of these bands of barbarians upon the conquered territory, the final collapse of the Roman Empire of the West with its state organisation up to the establishment of Feudalism as a recognised in-

stitution, it is still impossible to trace the details of the development of the new forms of human exploitation with sufficient accuracy through these ages of perpetual turmoil. The history of the poor, from the economic breakdown of chattel slavery to the general establishment, and in turn the general decay, of serfdom has not been adequately written. It comprises, we know, one long succession of horrors. The idea that the invaders brought with them freedom for the mass of the toilers is quite illusory. The landowners of the dark ages, notwithstanding the partial adoption of the methods of the village communities, were quite as brutal in their treatment of the subjugated peoples as were the slave-owners of old time.

## CHAPTER XVII

## FEUDAL ORIGINS

The feudal system on the continent of Europe thus arose out of the anarchy of endless and ruthless invasions, the break-up of all law and order, the growth of bands of brigands who roamed the country in search of plunder, and the consequent insecurity of workers of every kind. In considering the terrible drawbacks of feudalism and the miserable condition of the serfs and villeins on many of the feudal estates, we are apt to forget or to minimise the state of affairs which preceded its foundation and organisation. Over the greater part of the Roman Empire in decay there was no permanent security for life and property. Inhabitants of country and town were always in danger of slaughter, rapine, incendiarism and outrage of every kind. There was no limit to the horrors which might befall them. Cultivators of the soil were wholly at the mercy of hordes of barbarians and semi-civilised savages from without, as well as the less recorded but still more dreadful bands of freebooters from within.

They naturally looked round, therefore, to obtain protection of some sort. Neither the peasant himself nor his family was trained to military service or in a position to resist either foreign or domestic ruffians. His neighbours were as little qualified to hold their own as his own people. They were all, in fact, powerless, and there was no institution in existence which they could call in to their aid. Consequently leaders accustomed to war and devoted to military service, who gathered around them groups of fighting men, bound to them by success in the field or by remunerative plunder, when they established themselves in rough fortresses, castles or block-houses, were able to give the workers of all kinds assurance of some sort of security. Even the worst forms of personal military domination arranged between the fighting lords, with their vassals and their villeins, seemed preferable to the unlimited possibilities of perpetual outrage which were constantly threatening those who had no

such protection. Contracts of work, service and subservience, though including certain rights which seem to us sensual and cruel in a very high degree, were superior to the anarchy which previously prevailed. Even the right of the first night and the manchette, which in succeeding ages were so bitterly and rightfully resented, appear less horrible when we put ourselves back in imagination into the period that occasioned such inhuman arrangements, and accorded to a brutal and ignorant minority a supremacy in which the more or less cultured ecclesiastics cheerfully participated.

It was in its inception, and for long afterwards, a monstrous social system, little, if at all, in advance of the chattel slavery which it replaced. But out of it a milder and more civilised constitution might and did grow. The horrors of feudal overlordship, with its chivalry, were to the full as great in many ways as those of the large land and slave owners who were their predecessors. It was not from the good and romantic side of feudal domination that the further changes came. Nor, as later events clearly demonstrated, was it possible for these transformations to be brought about suddenly. As with Roman slavery and the Roman drain of wealth without return from the provinces, the economic and social causes below affected the permanence of the whole structure. When the basis was shaken the society as a whole was modified. The overthrow of the old, and the constitution of the new development arose from this modification. Force by itself could not, and did not bring about thorough transformation in any country, until, owing to economic circumstances, which were not necessarily crucial changes in the forms of production themselves, a fresh class had gradually grown up. This class was by degrees capable of defending itself and its slowly acquired social position against the worn-out institutions of the old supremacy. Premature attempts from the top to anticipate the course of evolution proved completely futile.

The natural inclination of historians of the individualist school to exalt unduly the power of great men induced even Gibbon to attach too much importance to the career of Charlemagne. A great man may help to hasten somewhat the pace of the current of his period; he may even arrest anarchy for a time and bring temporary order out of chaos. But that, in days

of overturn and conflict, any men or set of men can permanently advance or seriously check the general tendency is proved to be an illusion by all the teachings of history. This is true when there are no unforeseen external events to complicate and confuse the situation. But when to internal disorder is superadded anarchy engineered from without, not the ablest brain that ever functioned can achieve his purpose, or establish a continuous policy. Charlemagne tried to reorganise the separate and disorderly territories of the Roman Empire of the West into something approaching a cohesive and legally constituted power. He was partially successful during his lifetime, and he has on that account been universally acclaimed as a wise and foreseeing ruler. But how little of his influence was lasting, and to how small a degree the mass of the people in his dominions benefited by his wide Imperialist statesmanship, is apparent from what followed immediately upon his death.

All the elemental forces of social and industrial chaos broke out with more persistence than before. The tyranny and cruelty of the majority of the lords towards their dependents remained unchecked. Internecine conflicts between members of the royal house were faithfully reproduced among the nobles. All efficient combination against the inroads of pirates, swashbucklers, Moslems and barbarian hordes was thus rendered impossible. Normans, Arabs and Huns still continued their raids and devastations throughout the West. The Normans in France and Germany were for some time the most formidable of the three sets of invaders. They ravaged, butchered and pillaged all up the Rhine and its surrounding districts; burning the small towns and villages on the way, and collecting considerable booty from the abbeys, monasteries, convents and castles which they sacked. Semi-organised feudalism had no forces capable of resisting these ruthless tribes. Rushing down with their fleet of rovers from the North, these sea-wolves at the same date went up the Seine, carrying on the like programme of seemingly purposeless slaughter and rapine. Having looted the outlying towns and chateaux as they did in Germany, they then took and plundered Paris. These became familiar exploits. The numbers of these Scandinavian pirates were comparatively small, but their courage and ferocity were great.

What, however, gave special significance to these and many

other successful expeditions was that frequently the common folk in the invaded districts, furiously embittered against their own domestic enemies, the Frankish knights, who had formed part of the previous wave of exterminators and settlers, and the ecclesiastical oppressors who shared the plunder, made common cause with the Norman freebooters, taking advantage of the opportunity to avenge themselves terribly upon their persecutors. The cutting off of hands and feet, the disembowelling, burning alive and long drawn-out torturings, familiarly practised by the high-born aristocracy of expropriation and plunder upon their serfs and villeins, were inflicted upon them in turn by these same serfs and villeins, who gladly welcomed Normans as friends and allies. Rough justice was thus administered in France, Germany and elsewhere; just as Roman slaves had sometimes taken the like revenge upon their masters when, with the barbarian invasions, their chance came.

History and tradition tell of many instances when, under Charlemagne's feeble successors and later on, the peasantry, who saw no hope of relief from the life of toil and misery to which they were doomed, gave aid and information which enabled the raiders to capture towns and fortresses that might otherwise have successfully resisted attack. But these private slaughterings on the one side, to avenge terrible wrongs on the other, had no direct influence in bettering the condition of serfs and villeins. For the new invaders in France soon ceased to be mere invaders; they intermarried into the highest Frankish families, from the royal caste downwards, and became permanent exploiters and oppressors like the feudal magnates with whom they had allied themselves. They thus joined forces against the common people with their predecessors; and found no difficulty in embracing the Christian religion, which in these matters of class domination always proved very adaptable.

The Catholic Church, which has quite unwarrantably taken to itself great credit for ameliorating the lot of the peasants, as it did for emancipating the chattel slaves on equally invalid grounds, was one of the largest and most extravagant of landowners. The condition of the serfs and villeins on the estates of the princes of the Church was just as bad as it was on those of the nobles. Their possessions were enormous, as was clearly discerned at the time of the French Revolution. The properties belonging

to the Bishopric of Paris in the tenth century were carefully catalogued by the official scribe of that time. They exceed in value and extent the vast possessions of the great Roman millionaire, Atticus, and his wealth in money, land and slaves was spread over a much wider area. Estates, townships and villages in all the departments of France brought in great revenues. They extended over the best land in the country, with more than twenty thousand serfs. The great ecclesiastical potentate, who retained a large proportion of the wealth for his own use, lorded it over his lay peers with an amount of arrogance never exhibited by the proudest priests of paganism. When one of these bishops was to be newly enthroned, the King of France, Charles le Sot, with the help of the greatest of his nobility, carried the golden litter that bore him from his palace right into the cathedral. But the thousands upon thousands of serfs who provided this rich representative of the carpenter's Son with the enormous income he personally derived from his estates were no whit better off than the same class who toiled on the lands of the nobles of the day. It took more than eight hundred years to relieve the French people even partially from this intolerable usurpation of the Church, when the lands of bishops and feudal lords were dealt with together.

So slowly did events move in that long and mournful procession of misery for the mass of the toilers. For century after century Europe was exposed to a protracted siege from north and south and east and west. No sooner had one set of marauders been repelled, or allowed to settle down, than another equally ferocious horde took up the tale of rapine and slaughter. And, as if there were not enough to do at home, just as order was beginning to develop out of this chaos a succession of bootless crusades for the Holy Land, in which lives and wealth were thrown away to no good purpose whatsoever, rendered the confusion worse confounded. Feudal lords, knights and retainers, who might have been of some use on their estates even in consolidating their rough relations with their own dependents, involved themselves in debt, crushed their villeins and serfs and such townsfolk as they could conveniently mishandle by their exactions, and went off to the wars in Palestine and Asia Minor with the funds thus accumulated.

The wonder is that mankind in the West ever succeeded in

pulling itself out of this long concatenation of calamities, rendered more unendurable by the maniacal bigotry and bloody superstitions which accompanied them. That the most oppressed class of all were able at intervals to avenge themselves locally, even without the aid of foreign invaders, is certain. But revenge and repression alternately contributed little or nothing to social progress. This came about slowly, almost unseen, below the surface of these anarchical conflicts, which, embittered by religious fury, as in the case of the Albigenses, Huguenots, Lollards and others, led to slaughter of the most horrible kind. Clearly, had the men-at-arms who were guilty of these wholesale atrocities—not confined to the orthodox or Catholic side—combined to attack their masters, they would speedily have gained the day for themselves. But would this have enabled them to hasten forward their economic emancipation and establish a new system? The answer is only a blank —No.

It was not by accident that the feudal system, with its complicated personal arrangements, lasted more than twice as long as the Roman Empire. The local usages and customs, which accorded to the lords rights of justice and almost absolute power within the limits of their fiefs, were opposed by the central authority, or so much as remained of it, in every part of Europe. But local necessities proved stronger than centralised sovereignty. Feudal overlordship above and villeinage and serfdom below endured for many centuries, because, with all the cruelty and horror that accompanied them, there was no institution then available which could take their place. The king or emperor not infrequently favoured the growing power of the bourgeoisie in its early days as a means of holding his own against the greater established power of his nobles. But when independent or allied cities became rich, and capable of asserting their municipal freedom, both the king and the nobility were ready enough to make common cause against them. And all the upper strata of society, outside the successful republics of Italy and some of the German mercantile cities, considered the villeins and serfs and citizens of lower grade little better than human cattle, as their forbears the slaves were considered before them. The very small minority of the lords who behaved well to the people on their estates could not counterbalance the short-sighted

majority who so often plundered their peasantry that the latter ceased to be able to provide their masters with the wealth which they claimed. Moreover, many of these nobles were themselves no better than robbers and thieves, who used their fortified castles as centres where they could gather together trained ruffians to attack their neighbours, to strip travellers and to oppress the peasantry who might have looked to them for protection. This state of things was at periods quite common in France and over the greater part of Germany. When, however, peace prevailed, except for a comparatively short time, the undisturbed agricultural population soon restored the prosperity of the pacified region. Nor did the sporadic risings of the peasantry against local oppression interfere with this satisfactory growth, where moderate security reigned. The description by Froissart of the country round the Marne, shortly before the great outbreak of the Jacquerie, shows that the district was in a flourishing condition, in spite of the many troubles which France was passing through prior to the rising.

The country of the Albigenses also, at the time when it was attacked, plundered and devastated and the population massacred by Catholic bigots, was a flourishing district. Other regions which escaped for a time from the horrors of war and the rapine of peace had their periods of prosperity; for there is nothing more remarkable than the manner in which the French peasantry throughout their history have set to work, whenever the opportunity offered, to repair damage done from without or from within by increasing industry and persistent thrift. Nor were the peasantry of other parts of Europe who had fair play much behind their French compeers in the assiduous cultivation of their soil, and their endeavours to make good the desolation wrought. But the mere peace and common justice which they needed to ensure their well-being were precisely what they could not get, in those or in later times.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE JACQUERIE AND THE PARIS RISING

Throughout the long domination of the feudal system in France local spasmodic revolts by the serfs and villeins against the nobles who oppressed them were frequent. But these upheavals were rarely successful, even for a very short time; and accurate records of what occurred are not obtainable. Only when the insurgents received organised help from without, or aided invaders in their raids, were they able to enjoy the temporary luxury of revenge upon the lords and ecclesiastics who held them in thraldom. There is nothing in the known outburst of the "Jacques"—so called from the nickname of Jacques Bonhomme—in different parts of France which can compare for a moment, for vigour, duration and success, with the great risings of the chattel slaves in Italy and Sicily under the Roman Republic, or even with the revolt of the Bagaudæ in Gaul in the reign of Diocletian. At no time was there, so far as history can tell us, any serious danger of a general overthrow; and such small victories as the Jacques achieved during their chief rising, which occurred within circuit of a hundred miles of Paris, were gained only when, as at Senlis, the townsfolk, being attacked by the nobles, took part with the Jacques, or when they received valuable support from the commune and citizens of Paris.

The upheaval known by the name of the Jacquerie took place in 1358. It was due, not to the usual misrule or tyranny of the feudal nobility and chivalry, but to causes which could scarcely fail to bring about more than ordinary domestic trouble, if the agricultural population had any fight left in them at all. After the disastrous defeat of the French king, John, and his army by conglomerate English forces under the command of the Black Prince at Poitiers a cessation of hostilities was arranged, and the French forces were disbanded. During the battle the French nobles and knights had shown arrant cowardice, and deserved the contempt with which they were regarded by the

whole French nation. But the pusillanimity they displayed in the field was followed by the most horrible brigandage, carried on at the expense of the peasantry of the villages and small towns. Pillage, rape, torture, massacre went on daily. Such districts as could pay heavy ransom were spared for the time being, but in the long run whole districts were systematically robbed and devastated by these free companies of rapine. At last the serfs and villeins turned upon their ravagers and began a war of reprisals, in the course of which many castles and chateaux were burnt to the ground by the infuriated "Jacques," who wreaked a terrible vengeance upon the men, women and children of their enemies who fell into their hands. Yet they certainly carried out nothing worse, upon their much smaller scale, than the brigands and their allies, the feudal chiefs and the king himself habitually did before and after the upheaval.

The turning-point of the brief struggle was at the town and fortress of Meaux. Here a number of the nobility had taken refuge with their wives, to escape destruction by the maddened peasants. So numerous and determined were the attacking serfs that it seemed as if nothing could save the women of the aristocracy, including the Duchess of Normandy and others of high rank, from the fate which had so often befallen the peasant women. Suddenly, by the purest accident, two great French knights, Gaston de Foix and the Captal de Buch, with some twenty-five other knights and their attendants, appeared on the scene, and forced their way through the besiegers into the armed camp where the women were collected. Immediately thereafter they put their small force in order, and charging at their head in full armour, against which the miserable weapons of the serfs could inflict no wound, they routed the three thousand assailants and, according to the narrative of the time, butchered no fewer than two thousand of them on the spot and in the chase that followed. Here the highest minds in the dominant class were as furiously vindictive and ruthless as the greatest personages of the Roman Republic dealing with revolting slaves. The Captal de Buch and the Comte Gaston de Foix, like Edward the Black Prince, du Guesclin, Bayard and others, were brave, generous and merciful when fighting men of their own rank. But when it came to meeting the serfs and villeins of France they were capable of

any infamy. These unfortunate peasants were to them of no account whatever, save to till the soil and submit to all sorts of personal and pecuniary exactions; for the peasant (like the chattel slaves before the Emperors introduced some laws to his advantage) was barely treated as a man. Thus, in the day of victory over the insurgents no mercy was shown. The knights and nobles forgot, in their hatred and the memory of their previous terror, that it was to the economic interest of their class at least to keep the toilers alive, and to save the small towns and villages from fire and flames. But so great had been the panic that no such considerations weighed with them for a moment. Revenge, destruction and slaughter were allowed free play. In one district alone as many as twenty thousand unarmed peasants were butchered. After the disaster to the nobles at Senlis—where the army of the feudal lords, imagining that a mere parade march lay before them, entered the town in full confidence and were cut off by the peasantry—the fury of the rest of the nobility knew no bounds. Devastation and horror reigned supreme.

Treachery was brought in as usual, when, the peasants being the stronger party, that form of upper-class diplomacy seemed more advisable than mere brute force. Thus the King, Charles the Bad, when he found himself opposed to some three thousand peasants under the leadership of Guillaume le Cale, who showed generalship in arraying his half-armed followers for battle, invited le Cale to a peaceful conference in order to come to terms. No sooner had the peasant commander accepted this invitation, in good faith but with exceeding foolishness, than the King, of course, put him at once in irons, attacked and defeated the army deprived of its leader, whom immediately thereafter he brutally executed. Before this encounter there were not a few who imagined that the King himself was disposed to take the side of the peasants, and thus strengthen the power of the throne. But this was as complete an hallucination as the notion to which Guillaume le Cale and others fell victims: that a governing class ever keeps faith when its rights of property and social predominance seem in jeopardy. The King saw quite clearly that, however much he might desire to curb the arrogance and reduce the influence of the great feudal lords in the interest of the Crown and State, his vital interests, against the serfs and

peasants of the country-side, as well as against the growing power of the municipalities and their trade combinations, were closely bound up with theirs. Even if he and his successors had been genuinely favourable to the people they could not afford to dispense with the support of the feudal chiefs, or force them all into one camp against their superior by attempting to sap the foundations of the whole system. The time was far from ripe for such a policy; nor did any king of France before or after the fall of feudalism frankly adopt it. Henry IV., who, with his "every peasant his fowl in the pot," had some tendency in that direction, and was a far stronger monarch in every way than Charles the Bad, could not go further than words in expressing his sympathy; while his inevitable campaigns told heavily against the welfare of his subjects.

Large as this particular rising of the peasants looms in French history under its name of "the" Jacquerie, the whole revolt, so far as the serfs themselves were direct parties to it, lasted no more than a month. It was the fear inspired, rather than the success achieved, which gave the upheaval its importance. But a movement of far greater significance took place in Paris at the same time, which was to some extent associated with and helpful to the Jacquerie. This was the uprising of the citizens of Paris under the leadership of the famous Etienne Marcel, the head and provost of the merchants and trades of that city. But for the aid given from this quarter, it is probable that the attempt of the Jacquerie would have failed even sooner than it did. Marcel had the alliance of Robert le Coq in his endeavour to rouse the citizens of Paris and other towns against the Dauphin Charles, who had fled with no fewer than eight hundred lances from the rout of Poitiers, displaying on that occasion almost equal pusillanimity with the Duke of Orléans, who, with a powerful force, never took any part in the battle at all. The entire condition of France at this period was rendered well-nigh desperate, not only by the razzias and ravages committed by the companies of men-at-arms, frequently headed by or in alliance with the nobles, but by the systematic debasement of the currency, the terrible exactions demanded to pay the ransoms to the English for the release of King John and other high-placed prisoners in their hands, the insecurity of the roads, which rendered trade difficult if not impossible, and the lack of any capable central

authority. Yet bad as all this was, the conduct of the citizens of Paris took a different line to that of the Jacquerie. They and their envoys attacked and burned castles infested by brigands and freebooters, and had no hesitation in fighting against nobles who resisted them. But the armed forces of Paris were rarely if ever maddened into excesses against the defeated, or their women and children.

Etienne Marcel himself, however, committed a great blunder —crimes then were so common that we cannot apply the ethic of to-day to the deeds of the fourteenth century. He made the mistake of putting to death, without trial, one of the King's legal representatives in the Parliament; while his slaughter of the marshals of Normandy and Champagne, not only in the presence of but in actual touch with the Dauphin, was worse than a crime. "Stone dead hath no fellow." Yet the leader of the people in troubled times who acts upon that aphorism plays into the hands of his rivals and enemies, and renders any accommodation with the ruler whose counsellors have been sacrificed impossible, when circumstances give him in turn the ascendancy. This removal of the marshal by Marcel's followers in the royal presence, even if it had been justified, in view of the marshal's own treachery to the people, furnished an excuse for similar action at Marcel's expense when he, being unable to control the Dauphin and the opposing party of citizens in Paris, intrigued with the King of Navarre and was ready to hand over Paris to that prince.

But whatever his mistakes may have been in practice, the policy of Marcel and his coadjutor, the Bishop of Laon, was very different from the anarchical effort of the serfs and peasants, who merely sought to avenge their wrongs upon the nobles without having any clear idea of what they would do next. Marcel and Robert le Coq had for their part quite definite objects in view—objects so admirable in themselves and so beneficial to France, if they could by any means have been attained, that even in the twentieth century they have not as yet reached their fulfilment. A brief summary of M. Siméon de Luce, from the Charters promulgated at the time, seems to put Marcel and his friends on a very high plane, in company with the greatest men who, being unfortunately in advance of their time, tried to accommodate their ideas and

principles to the practical possibilities of the epoch in which they lived.

First and foremost Marcel intended to cut at the root of the abuses of royal despotic authority by enforcing the recognition of the self-government of the communes of France combined in a federation after the model of the good towns of Flanders, and having at their head the Commune of Paris, safeguarding only the high political suzerainty of the King. Private wars between nobles forbidden; payment and equipment of the army and, more important still, the power to carry on or to suspend war decided by arbitration of the States; dominial concessions made since the reign of Philip le Bel revoked; the safety of all subjects ensured against the abuse of judgments by commission; trade freed from unfair and ruinous competition by restraining magistrates from carrying on business; the receipt of supplies voted removed from the hidden accountancy of the agents of the treasury and placed under the control of public functionaries elected by the States, audited also by delegates nominated by that body; royalty prohibited from debasing the coinage; lastly, the government, while the assemblies were not sitting, to be entrusted to the King, aided by thirty-four members of the Council of the States, seventeen from the Tiers Etat (bourgeoisie), eleven from the clergy, and six from the nobility.

This series of thoroughly statesmanlike measures was carried in 1356-1357, and accepted by the Dauphin and his nobility, enfeebled as they were by the crushing defeat of Poitiers. But we have only to look at the terms imposed upon the Dauphin and the Regent, and consider how the economic and social development of France then stood, to see that no heir to the throne would submit to the surveillance of thirty-four delegates of the *états-généraux* one moment longer than he need. The murder of his adherents at the instance of Marcel and the proclamation by Marcel's allies, Robert le Coq and Jean de Pacquigny, of Charles the Bad of Navarre as King of France complicated the situation still further. Moreover, the dominant position given to the Tiers Etat in the Council of thirty-four (from which, of course, the peasantry were entirely excluded) is conclusive evidence that neither Marcel nor le Coq understood that the middle or trading class had by no means risen to the level of influence which entitled them to such representation. They felt

the need of support, and looked to the rising power of the bourgeoisie to maintain them in their control of the Dauphin. Yet a hundred years later Louis XI., with all his supreme statecraft and unscrupulous polity, found his capacity strained to the utmost in his endeavour to play a similar game under far more favourable conditions. Meanwhile Marcel's co-operation with the Jacquerie, and the high tone adopted by the Commune of Paris in the provinces, turned a large portion of the population around the metropolis against him: an antagonism which has been strongly exhibited even in our own day. Thus the collapse of the Jacquerie, the impossibility of keeping the Dauphin under his control, the growth of the party of opposition among the citizens of Paris themselves, induced Marcel to enter into his fatal intrigue with Charles the Bad by which he was to have given the keys of the city to that prince in return—as the provost expected—for his installing Marcel as virtual Mayor of the Palace and the real master of France. The result was to embolden his chief enemy in Paris, John Maillart, to make a sudden attack upon him just as the plot was on the point of being carried out. Marcel was killed by John Maillart on the spot, and his followers and friends were tortured to death with every refinement of cruelty.

Thus the Jacquerie and the great effort of the first Commune of Paris as a political entity came to an end almost simultaneously. Greatly as we must admire the attempt of Marcel, le Coq and their coadjutors to bring some sort of democratic and representative order out of the social, economic, financial and other troubles which then afflicted so large a part of France; much as we may regret the fate of Guillaume le Cale and others who tried in vain to discipline the peasantry and inspire them with some sort of strategy and tactics; fully also as we can recognise that these struggles for freedom, though futile, helped forward the cause of emancipation through the centuries: none the less the whole endeavour which then so speedily collapsed came to its sudden end, not on account of the mistakes made or the crimes committed by leaders or followers, but by the truth, once more made manifest, that the stage of economic and social development then attained did not permit of success. This does not mean that the revolts of the French middle class or the French serfs against tyranny and misgovernment were

unjustifiable. They were justifiable on every ground that one can urge for political action or violent upheaval of any kind : never more so than in the day of Etienne Marcel and John le Coq. But again and again and again we see, in the cruel and protracted effort of mankind to get free from its own self-imposed but unconscious domination by an oppressive minority, that ideals, justice, truth, morality or character have little or no effect on the result of the conflict. Marcel was in every way superior to his opponents and murderers. The cause of the serfs and peasants was light against darkness as compared with the claims of the nobility and the brigands—at that epoch almost convertible terms. But these were ineffective incidents in the long, grinding, bitter class war between serfs and nobles, traders and king. The antagonism was more relentless in France than in England, because, as French historians have often pointed out, at the time of the battles of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt there were in France no such great bodies of free yeomen as those who fought in their own ranks, side by side with the English feudal barons, and won great victories for the overlords of England. But even if there had been, nothing shows that the general progress could have been more rapid under the economic and social conditions then existing.

So four hundred and thirty-five years passed away in foreign and domestic warfare, and frightful misery and hardship for the French people, before the feudal system was put an end to by law and a portion of Marcel's programme for the Tiers Etat was realised.

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE PEASANTS' WAR IN ENGLAND

The conquest of England by William the Norman, and the French inheritances of the Angevin and Plantagenet kings involved little less than the ruin of a large part of France for several generations. The French humorous claim that England is "a French colony *mal tourné*" is all very well as a jest to-day, but it was no laughing matter for France then. Invasion after invasion, war after war, conducted too often, when the invaders were successful, after the ruthless fashion of the immediate piratical ancestors of the King and robber nobles who led and commanded the English armies, proved one continual curse to the unfortunate inhabitants of the disputed territories. That has been partially shown by our brief survey of the Jacquerie. But the English wars and razzias upon French provinces, carried on systematically by the Plantagenet monarchs, were little better in their results than the wholesale anarchy which followed upon Poitiers. Crécy before and Agincourt afterwards, the frightful maraudings of Edward the Black Prince, his massacres at Limoges and otherwhere, as well as the terrible conquests of Henry V., were all so many almost irreparable disasters for France. It was, in the long run, a good thing for both countries that the new spirit breathed into the French by Joan of Arc enabled them to drive the English across the Channel.

But although England found the means to wage these wars of aggression for her foreign rulers, and wasted year after year on these bootless enterprises men and money which could have been far better employed at home, it is nevertheless the fact that the Norman Conquest and the Norman dominance, nay, even the French wars themselves, by increasing the dependence of her kings upon the money of her burgesses and the arms of her yeomen, gave England the opportunity for consolidating the liberties of her purely English people which otherwise might

have been delayed. Her dynasty was foreign and used a strange language; the more important lords gradually separated their political influence, after the failure of the great French parliamentary leader, Simon de Montfort, from the lower knighthood and burgesses of London and the provincial towns; the mass of the people began to feel their growing strength merely as Englishmen, who inherited a bluff good-fellowship and rough love of freedom from the gentile system and village communities of their Anglo-Saxon forbears. On the battle-fields of France, as in the fights on the Scotch and Welsh borders, the common folk, trained to the use of bow and arrow and other arms, showed the feudal magnates and their retainers that they were the better men; and all these things, coming together, had developed in England a body of burgesses and yeomen who, ashore or afloat, in the field or at the council table, rarely met their match.

But this independence, self-confidence and rough domestic vigour were based, as foreign observers were quick to note, upon the material well-being of the upper grades of the common people. It was their economic and social position which made them resolute sticklers for their rights in peace and such very ugly customers in war. They had gained solidly in political influence as well as in rude personal comfort during the French wars. From the time of collective assertions and individual development under Henry I. to the confirmation of all the freemen had won in the Great Charter under John, and thence onwards through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the manorial system, which constituted the basis of English feudalism, had gradually given way before the resistance of a large minority of the freemen at the top and the villeins at the bottom. Yet there were plenty of these latter to be fully emancipated from attachment to the soil and subservience to the lord, especially in regard to the right of marriage. Moreover, the growth of free labourers out of this very section of the peasantry had grown into a revolutionary factor in the coming social development. Under the newer methods of farming there was plenty of room for the labourers, who earned their chief support by hiring themselves out to the larger peasant farmers now cultivating portions of the special manorial demesne on lease. This process of emancipation and social improvement was going on all the time in spite of the disasters

across the Channel, which were bringing English rule in France to an end, while at the same time the home trade and foreign commerce of the towns was making way. The rights of the Lord of the Manor, in fact, were being slowly sapped; and the duties which the serfs had to fulfil in tilling on his behalf were replaced by the very different relations between landlord and tenant farmer. At the same time the needs of the nobility and chivalry constantly tended to change the other labour demands for money payments.

It is clear that prior to the plague of the Black Death, whose ravages, terrible as they were, seem to have been exaggerated, the whole of the Middle Age arrangements were undergoing a crucial transformation. The serfs and villeins were not only being relieved by their masters, but were relieving themselves from onerous personal obligations by conscious revolt, and at times by threatening combinations against authorities who might endeavour to enforce the continuance of the old conditions of personal servitude. The enormous loss of life by the Black Death strengthened the position of the free labourers who were left, and enabled them to demand payment far in excess of what they could command before. But as prices of food, owing to scarcity, had risen at the same time, it is doubtful whether the increase of wages relatively bettered the condition of those toilers who were chiefly, still less those who were exclusively, dependent upon money payments in return for work done. However this may be, it is certain that for the next thirty years after the outburst of the plague in 1348 a great effort was made by the landowning classes to set back the movement of social and economic emancipation going on below. There were plenty of genuine poor at this period to justify the furious denunciation of John Ball and his fellow hedge-priests, as well as the scathing satire of Piers Plowman. No worse moment could have been chosen to enter upon a reactionary and unjust policy. No time could have been more favourable to the revolt of an awakened people. And of all the measures calculated to combine the whole country against not only King and nobles, but Parliament itself, with its repressive statutes, a poll tax, falling upon the poor with far greater weight and severity than upon the well-to-do, was the one financial enactment certain to produce this result.

The whole country was well prepared for the rising which followed. A systematic agitation, so far as was possible in those days, had been carried on against the dominant class for years beforehand. The ownership of land and the ostentation of wealth of all kinds were denounced with apostolic enthusiasm combined with rough popular rhymes and phrases and not a little blunt and telling English humour. All the vigour, courage and sense of fair play which then animated Englishmen were thus concentrated in one great effort against their rulers. The rising of 1381, known as the Peasants' War, was manned by a very different set of people from those who constituted the French Jacquerie. Many of the peasants and yeomen had fought in the French wars, and though their forces were not well armed as a whole, there were enough among them in possession of good weapons to inspire confidence in the rest.

The history of the upheaval is so well known, as far as the imperfect records of the time admit, and its significance has been so fully set out and commented upon from different points of view that any detailed account would be out of place. But the attention of historians of all schools has been almost exclusively given to the part played in the upheaval by the vigorous "men of Kent" under the leadership of the famous Wat Tyler. This man knew well what he was about. The common citizens and apprentices of London were obviously favourable to his enterprise, seeing that his army was able to enter the capital without opposition, and the Tower of London fell into his hands without any resistance. There was no looting or incendiarism. Those only fell victims to the revolting peasantry who had, as they thought, prevented a peaceful solution of the whole difference by interfering between themselves and the King. Tyler himself, with London in his power and his army encouraged by success, was still willing to negotiate; knowing by experience as a soldier the difficulty of keeping a large body of men together, even in the metropolis, without thorough discipline and an organised commissariat. He therefore went forward without, as it appears, a proper personal guard, to treat with King Richard II. in person. What followed he might have anticipated, if only from what had so often happened before. The King, pretending that he himself would lead the people and grant them their demands, took good care

that Tyler should be treacherously murdered. His immediate following, discouraged by the death of their leader, disbanded, and were cruelly butchered by the King and his nobles. Partial successes were achieved by the peasants in the counties surrounding London, and over the greater part of England. But the result in every case was the same. The leaders were either killed, treacherously assassinated, or condemned by suborned courts and corrupt juries; and the peasants fell victims to their enemies.

None of the horrors which befell the French Jacquerie on their defeat were spared to the English peasantry after their struggle. Atrocities of the most abominable description were wreaked upon the defeated people and their families wherever the least opportunity was offered. The King distinguished himself by his ruthlessness in this campaign of butchery, as might have been expected from the son of the Black Prince. He and his barons rivalled the French nobles in their hideous acts of cruelty. But the English peasants, being further advanced in their progress towards the next period, were better able to withstand their oppressors, and the conflict, instead of being brought to an end within thirty days, extended over several months. There was the less excuse for the reign of terror instituted over so large a part of the country, since the insurrectionists were guilty of little outrage and destruction. Moreover, the demands of the serfs and peasants for complete emancipation and financial relief from odious taxation were so obviously just, and, what is more important in our consideration of historical sequence, so fully in accordance with the stage of economic and social development attained, that even the young King, guided by his more capable counsellors, suggested that it might be well to anticipate the inevitable by granting freedom and withdrawing the obnoxious poll tax. But the time for full surrender was not yet.

Once more, therefore, the rightful endeavour of an oppressed class, this time our own countrymen, to secure their enfranchisement by force of arms failed, under circumstances where success might reasonably have appeared to the revolters almost certain. Not only were their claims justifiable and, if they had been granted, beneficial in the long run to the dominant class itself, but, having obtained control of the metropolis, they held a strong strategic and economic position. By means of this

Tyler judged that he could compel the acceptance of such terms as would ensure to the people all over England everything that could be gained by force at that juncture, confirming also their political position at the same time. Yet the peasants and their friends, the farmers and small bourgeoisie, miscalculated their strength. Not that the rising was entirely without its influence later. The fear of what might occur of a similar character on a larger scale helped towards the recognition of the freedoms of the people, accompanying the final break-up of the feudal system in England, and the greatly increased well-being of the mass of Englishmen from the close of the fourteenth century onwards throughout the fifteenth. The latter century, notwithstanding the general disturbance of the country by the Wars of the Roses and the suicide of the barons and their retainers, by their treacherous campaigns against one another and the frequent changes of kingship, was the most favourable age for the mass of Englishmen that the nation had yet reached.

What had been striven for unavailingly by force in the previous generation, was realised almost imperceptibly by the immediate descendants of the men who had listened to the exhortations of John Ball, and tried to realise them by fighting under Wat Tyler. In the middle of the century villeinage and serfdom had virtually disappeared all over England through the unseen but inevitable social changes brought about by economic necessity. Englishmen, from the close of the reign of Richard II. to the early portion of that of Henry VIII., were in the main a well-to-do body of free farmers and free labourers, having friendly relations with the artisans, citizens and burgesses of the towns. As a whole the Englishmen of that period were a population well-fed, well-clothed, not ill-housed, alike in town and in country, who had a clear conception of their own rights and importance. The silent progress of peace had gained for them a great social victory. The temporarily successful political rising of Jack Cade was chiefly remarkable for the facts that practically all classes of the men of Kent joined in his movement; that his army easily defeated the forces of the King; and that, although Cade himself was sacrificed when his followers dispersed, no attempt was made at revenge upon the insurrectionists such as had been wreaked upon Tyler's peasants seventy years before. They

gained little by their revolt beyond the privilege of recording their "complaint," but they retained the independent position they had previously acquired.

England thus affords another example that the course of economic events and unconscious social progress may secure prosperity for a people who have been unable to win their way to freedom by arms before the time was ripe. Yet no country has so completely demonstrated the truth that economic changes may also crush the mass of an agricultural population, in spite of the conjoint efforts of the Government and people to check this harmful development, favoured by the socially dominant class of the period. The sixteenth century, with all its national, piratical and literary glamour for the upper classes, was the century when the English common folk were deprived of control over their own land, by a series of events which hitherto have had no parallel in any other country. This expropriation was accompanied by an increase of vagrancy and vagabondage, due to no laziness on the part of those thus turned into homeless wanderers, which laid the foundation in Great Britain, even thus early, of the propertyless wage-slave class of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The first symptom of the break-up of the old feudal system, so far as it affected the lot of the common folk, was the discharge by the impoverished barons of the numbers of retainers who were necessary to secure their status, and even their safety during the civil wars, but were an intolerable encumbrance upon them when the bloody struggle came to an end. By his marriage with Elizabeth of York, Henry VII. after the battle of Bosworth rendered his title to the throne almost indisputable; and, to make his position yet more secure, he enforced upon those landowners who were still able to keep large bodies of men in attendance the discharge of these unprofitable servants who had no longer any parasitical duties to perform. Hence many of these unfortunate retainers of the lower grades who had no land at their disposal to till found themselves out upon the highways unable to earn a living. They were regarded therefore as vagrants and "masterless men," wandering about not because they were unable to get employment, but because they left their places of birth out of sheer perversity. Statutes against them were passed from 1494 onwards, and the clauses

of these became more and more cruel as time went on and vagrants became more numerous. For other forces were at work to aggravate the condition of the poor. The landowners, who had been ruined by the debts incurred by the wars, sought to reimburse themselves by enclosing the people's common land and other lands, recognised as appertaining to the villagers.

At the same time the farmers, like the landowners who cultivated their own property or the common lands they had enclosed, resorted to pasture instead of arable farming, in order to supply wool, which was then at a very high price, for the home, and above all for the Flemish wool manufacturers. This raising of wool showed two profits to the farmer: one in the saving of wages (for sheep need fewer hands to the acre than arable land), the second by the rise in the price of wool. Thus, while the yeomanry and tenantry were being removed often by fraudulent devices, the introduction of sheep-farming greatly reduced the number of labourers employed on the farms. Two such different men as Sir Thomas More, writing at the time, and Lord Bacon, writing as a student of history in the reign of James I., notice the ruinous effect of this reactionary movement on the land. Thus More speaks of the injury done to the commonwealth by those who "leave no ground for tillage, they enclose all into pastures, they throw down houses. Therefore," he proceeds, "that one covetous and insatiable cormorant and very plague of his native country may compass about and enclose many thousands acres of ground together within one pale or hedge, the husbandmen be thrust out of their own, or else by coveyn and fraud, or by violent oppression, they be put beside it, or by wrongs and injuries they be so worried that they be compelled to sell all: by one means, therefore, or another, either by hook or by crook, they must needs depart away, poor silly, wretched souls, men, women, husbands, wives, fatherless children, widows, woeful mothers with their young babes, and their whole household, small in substance and much in number, as husbandry requireth many hands. Away they trudge, I say, out of their known and accustomed houses finding no place to rest in. All their household stuff, which is very little worth, though it might well abide the sale, yet being suddenly thrust out, they may be constrained to sell it for a thing of nought. And, when they have wandered about till

that be spent, what can they else do but steal and then justly, pardy, be hanged, or else go about begging. And yet these, also, they be cast into prison as vagabonds, because they go about and work not; whom no man will set awork though they never so willingly proffer themselves thereto. For one shepherd or herdsman is enough to set up that ground with cattle to the occupying whereof about husbandry many hands were requisite. And this is also the cause why victuals be now in many places dearer. Yea, besides this, the price of wool is so that poor folks which were wont to work it, and make cloth thereof, be now able to buy none at all. And by this means very many be forced to forsake work and to give themselves to idleness."

Lord Bacon in his turn deals with the same set of circumstances. But he states, quite incorrectly, that the legislation of Henry VII., which he approves, checked the evil, whereas it did nothing of the kind. Thus: "Enclosures at that time began to be more frequent, whereby arable land, which could not be manured without people and families, was turned into pasture which was easily rid by a few herdsmen; and the tenancies for years, lives and at will, whereupon much of the yeomanry lived, were turned into demesnes. Thus began a decay of people, and by consequence a decay of towns, churches, tithes and the like. The King likewise knew full well, and in nowise forgot, that there ensued withal upon this decay, and diminution of subsidies and taxes for the more gentlemen." For this last reason more particularly Henry VII. was very anxious to check or at least to reduce this tendency to expropriate the peasant farmers from their holdings, to extend the area of enclosures and to substitute pasture for arable farming. Hence, as Bacon records, an ordinance: "That all houses of husbandry that were used with twenty acres of ground and upwards should be used and kept for corn; together with a competent proportion of land to be used and occupied with them and in nowise to be severed from them, as by another statute made afterwards in his successor's time was more fully declared: this upon forfeiture to be taken, not by popular action, but by seizure of the land itself, by the kings and the lords of fee, as to half the profits until the house and lands were restored. By this means the houses being kept up did of necessity enforce that dweller not to be a beggar or a cottager

but a man of some substance that might keep hinds and servants, and set the plough going."

This was all very well; but the Statutes had no more effect upon the victory of the enclosers and sheep farmers than the horrible laws against vagrants, under which they were flogged, branded, tortured, hanged or enslaved, prevented the economic effects of this systematic land-grabbing, and the pastoral competition with arable culture, from turning out thousands of poor people on the highroads, to be treated in this ruthless fashion. The overthrow of the monasteries, priories and convents, and the giving of their lands to the King's favourites, or their retention in ownership by Henry VIII. himself, did but intensify the prevailing tendency to vagabondage which was terribly prevalent at the time when Bacon wrote. The abbots and priors, after the decay of serfdom, had been for their own sake easy landlords, who helped the poor and kept up the roads between their farms. But the good and the ill they did were swept away together. The courtiers and rogues who obtained their estates performed no such social duties, to balance a greed and laziness quite equal to all the shortcomings imputed to the celibate men of God in this respect.

Thus the King's enactments, even when well-intentioned, were powerless to stop economic action to the hurt of the peasants, and the laws prohibiting vagrancy under hideous penalties failed entirely of effect. Also, in England under Henry VIII., as in France a hundred years before, the debasement of the coinage affected harmfully the entire country; and monarchical misrule, going hand in hand with the removal of all power from the lower strata of the trade guilds, reduced the heirs of the free Englishmen of the fifteenth century to a much inferior position in the sixteenth. This was followed by other serious risings over nearly the whole country from Devonshire to Norfolk, in which men of considerable substance, like Kett, the famous tanner of Wymondham, led the common folk. Here, in many cases, religious devotion to the old creed went with hatred of intolerable oppression; and in some districts men of far higher standing than those who took part in the previous risings helped the popular movement. All to no purpose, however. Revolt beat unavailingly against the tyranny of the King and the landowners. The people, who were suffering under every form of

injustice, were driven back to their hovels: their leaders, as usual, were hanged. While the trading class under the Tudors were being greatly enriched by commerce, and the intellectual minority of the metropolis and the country were displaying a brilliancy in literature and philosophy which will bear comparison with the best period of Athens, the mass of the people were being deprived of freedom and well-being to an extent from which they have never yet recovered.

Such is the perpetual irony of economic and social history. Periods in the life of mankind which seem on looking back the highest and most beautiful in the annals of the race, periods when art, science, letters flourished to such a degree that even now we can scarcely comprehend how so much glory and beauty and dignity were crowded within such narrow limits of time and space—these very days of intellectual magnificence and greatness covered up the vile condition of the toilers below—a condition the more degrading and horrible by reason of the splendour above which we so deeply admire and strive in vain to rival and imitate. This is most true of the Elizabethan age. It was indeed a stirring time. A new world was being discovered in art and science in Europe as well as in actual existence on the other side of the Atlantic. Statesmen and thinkers, churchmen and courtiers, soldiers and navigators, poets and dramatists sweep past us in magnificent array. All is full of life and colour. Few groups stand out in bolder relief than the great men who gathered around the throne of the Tudors. Never before had so strong an impulse been given to human enterprise and human imagination; never in England have noble minds been more ready to embrace great opportunities. From the point of view of the dominant class of our day, nothing can be finer than the survey: the rise of our bourgeoisie is surrounded with a glamour which conceals from most observers the growth of misery among the people. Yet from the first years of the sixteenth century the lot of the great mass of working Englishmen, which had been so flourishing and so wholesome, became miserable in the extreme, and the labourers of England were reduced to destitution—plunged quite unnecessarily from the age of gold into the iron age.

## CHAPTER XX

## THE GERMAN BAUERN KRIEG

The last, and by far the most formidable, of the peasant wars in Europe began in Germany in the autumn of 1524, and broke out into open revolt in the spring of 1525. The general causes of this serious upheaval were much the same as those of the Jacquerie in 1358 and the English Peasant Rising in 1381. But there was no defeat and consequent rapine and devastation by the disbanded soldiery as happened in France after the rout of Poitiers to rouse the peasantry; nor were there such obvious reasons for discontent and forcible resistance as brought about the rising under Wat Tyler and his fellow-leaders in England. On the other hand, nowhere was the continuous oppression of the feudal nobles and the knights more keenly felt than in Central Europe; and the complaints of the peasantry, with their frequent local spasmodic efforts at emancipation from the outrageous tyranny and cruelty, prove that feudalism had ceased to have any "good side" to its brutality, so far as the mass of the people were concerned. Raids, robbery and spoliation by the higher and lower order of landowners had become a portion of the people's everyday life. There was nothing to restrain the nobles. Appeal by the peasants to the Emperor and courts against this systematic plunder was useless.

Such proceedings were regarded as essential to maintain the due standing in court and in castle of all who were raised, by lineal descent or Imperial favour, above the traders and the common herd. Nor did these landed aristocrats and manorial magnificos confine their piracies and lootings to their own or other people's tenantry. Up and down the Rhine and other important rivers, along the principal trade routes by land—highroads they could not be called—were situated fortified castles, whose ruins, or restored battlements, remain to this day, whence the owners sallied forth with their retainers to exact toll, ransom, or, if need were, complete surrender of their goods, from

any traffickers or merchants who passed that way. They constituted part of the risks of home commerce, and their exactions from all sections of the community, directly and indirectly, did much to keep prices at a high level.

Details are not wanting to show how the barons of Central Europe rivalled their fellow-nobles in other lands in their abominable treatment of their serfs and peasants. Perhaps they did not resort quite so frequently as the worst type of French aristocrat to the horrible punishment of cutting off the feet of their serfs when they stood out against ruinous seizure of their crops, nor did they indulge so often in the extremes of lustful cruelty familiar in the annals of other aristocracies; though even this partial limitation of their brutality is of doubtful certitude. But in the outrageous treatment of their defenceless people for trifling offences nothing ever exceeded the infamy of the German nobles. Muttering against the lord, accidental failure to accord to him the most degrading evidence of servility, failure to pay in kind or in money the demands of the feudal landowner, were avenged by imprisonment in frightful dungeons, by torture relentlessly repeated, and often by death. Every restriction imposed upon fishing, capture or shooting of game, or gathering of wood was rigorously enforced. Customs telling in favour of the tenantry were frequently disregarded, and increased gratuitious service under the feudal *corvée* was introduced wherever possible. As elsewhere, also, the serfs and peasants were mulcted in heavy fines, or in such penalties as the lord thought proper to enforce on the marriage of their daughters, a power bitterly resented in every country where it was exercised.

As to the inhabitants of the townships, they also had their grievances against the greater nobles from whom they had mostly obtained their municipal rights; while the gradual destruction of democratic control in the trade guilds was increasing the influence of the rich masters and traders and putting the free journeymen and craftsmen into the position of dependent wage-earners, with less and less possibility of becoming masters of the craft.

Thus there was plenty of ground for dissatisfaction and resistance in small towns—all German towns were then really small—and country alike. The economic and social antagonisms

were never greater; and, at the same time, the extension of the art of printing and the growth of public discussion on religious and secular matters, even among the common people, helped to spread the general discontent.

Other causes are given for the rising at this particular date, in addition to those recited above, which are commonly recognised. The whole feudal system was being shaken, owing to its incapacity to adapt itself to the new forms of industry being introduced, to the unobserved but steady improvements in agriculture, to the substitution of money payments for barter in exchange and in payment of dues, to the extension of trade, the scarcity of the precious metals, and the commencement of production and trade for the world market. Yet it is easy to attach too much importance to nearly the whole of these modifications in the Central Europe of 1525. No doubt the Hanseatic League and Germany generally were beginning to feel the influence on trade of the discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, the diversion of Eastern commerce from the great Mediterranean seaports to the Atlantic by the Ottoman Turks, and the extension of trade with Flanders and England as well as with France and Spain. But that this expansion had got far enough to affect seriously, either directly or indirectly, the position of the peasants who formed the backbone of the insurrection—for Germany produced no Etienne Marcel and had no Paris to form a centre of political influence—may fairly be regarded as unlikely. Nor can it be confidently urged that the feudalism of Germany, taken as a whole, was nearly so far advanced towards its decay and downfall as the intellectual activity then being exhibited might lead us to suppose. There were changes going on which eventually shook the whole edifice. But they were working even more slowly than elsewhere, and continued to do so for generations afterwards. Serfdom did not come to an end in Germany till 1811; and Germany, even in 1920, for all its Republic, is the most feudalist nation in Europe. The Junkers of Germany, living and working upon their great estates, detestable as they are in all national and international relations, are still feudal magnates modernised, with the resources of science at their disposal. There has been no French nor even English revolution in Germany, and the reason for this may be traced back to the sixteenth century.

There is probably more in the contention that the great rise of Protestantism in Germany, the growing revolt against Catholicism, then in its most corrupt and criminal period of Roman supremacy, had some effect, like Lollardism and "the hedge priests" in England, in rousing a new spirit in the people. It is certain that the most widely spread agitatory literature, and the most vigorous section of the propagandists, adopted a strong Biblical and religious tone. Curiously enough, however, the demand for the salvation of the individual hereafter took precedence of the forcible attempt to secure individual well-being here. How far the one really anticipated or produced the other it is difficult to say. The strict school of economic determinism is of opinion that the whole Protestant movement, in its widest sense, was a purely psychological expression of social and economic striving for individual emancipation below. It may be so, but it is difficult to descry this exclusively material influence at work to produce the revolt against the domination of Rome in religion from Huss and others onwards. Moreover, there is the very clearest historic proof that in different countries, as well as in parts of the same country, Catholicism, when apparently defeated and at its last gasp, not only retained its hold upon territory it was still controlling, but even regained ground previously lost. This ecclesiastical success was achieved, although the economic and social movement went on, there as elsewhere, in the same way as before.

But that is aside from the matter in hand. The truth appears to be that in all great historic periods the two elements of progress are so closely allied that it is impossible to separate them. As is well pointed out by Bax in his history of this same Peasants' War, every new religion partly absorbs, and partly is absorbed by the preceding dominant creed. So also the economic progress goes on below, only influenced at special times by the form of religion favoured above. But the fact that the peasants in Germany took not only their phraseology, but even some of their revolutionary proposals from the Jewish sacred and secular literature embodied in the Bible, as many of the English peasants did in their revolts, and the English middle class did during its revolution a hundred years and more later, only proves that mankind can turn its most effective and popular theological literature to immediate social use.

Unquestionably the success which the peasants achieved at first against their lords and landowners was largely due to the absence of the armed and trained men of the nobility, who were following Emperor Charles V. in his campaign against Francis I., which ended in his crushing defeat of the French king at Pavia. There was also the hereditary contempt for the serfs and peasants which led the aristocracy and knighthood to believe that they were something less than men, and that, therefore, in spite of the numerous local risings for revenge which preceded the greater outbreak, the attack could never be really serious. They were mistaken. If there had been any organised and centralised control of the local risings, had the peasants found any really capable military leader, such as Götz von Berlichingen might have been, they would have done much more than they did. But, above all, what was needed was a combination between town and country, a consolidation of political and rural action all round. Yet for this the time was not ripe, and the lack of comprehension, not to say the antagonism between the peasants and the growing class of indigent townsfolk, was a weakness throughout.

The first important rising occurred in the Black Forest in August, 1524. As elsewhere, the peasants found a local leader of some military experience. Clearly the whole country was ready for revolt, since the unrest spread so rapidly that by the end of October the peasants had a formidable force which induced the magnates of the district to negotiate seriously with them and to promise certain concessions. The demands of the peasants were extremely moderate, dealing only with obvious injustice and oppression relating to the land. All the suggestions of reform on the side of the lords were the merest pretence, put forward to gain time to concentrate their own forces, and collect a body of free companies and other mercenaries to co-operate with them. The nobility never had any intention of giving way on any point; and they relied upon bad faith and treachery, as well as organised force to retain their rights of oppression over their serfs and villeins. In March, 1525, the peasants formulated their famous twelve articles, drawn up by a minister, and forming a curious mixture of Biblical aspiration and simple claims for decent treatment. These twelve articles were accepted in their original form all over Germany. But, divested of the theo-

logical phraseology, they were thus summarised by the peasants of one district:

1. Gospel shall be preached according to the true faith.
2. No tithes shall be given, neither great nor small.
3. There shall be no longer interest and no longer dues, more than one gulden in twenty.
4. All waters shall be free.
5. All woods and forests shall be free.
6. All game shall be free.
7. None shall any longer be in a state of villeinage.
8. None shall obey any longer any prince or lord, but such as pleaseth him, and that shall be the Emperor.
9. Justice and right shall be as of old time.
10. Should there be one having authority who displeaseth us, we shall have the power to set up in his place another as it pleaseth us.
11. There shall be no more death dues.
12. The common lands which the lords have taken to themselves shall again become common lands.

(Bax.)

There is nothing here of the revolutionary and idealist programme which soon after came to the front, as the towns began to have their say in the matter. Men such as Hipland, Weigand, Gaismayer, Pfeiffer and, above all, Munzer, had far wider projects, religious and political, in view than these simple agrarian reforms. They were, in fact, to use the phrase of a much later time, Christian Socialists, or socialisers of a theological turn of mind, who desired to institute that Kingdom of God upon earth, which varies so remarkably in conception according to the idea of the divinity obtaining at the time, and the material conditions which seem to be required for its realisation. Men and women, however, peasants and proletarians alike, have always been found ready and even eager to sacrifice themselves for what is no more than a genial hallucination. It certainly was so in Germany at this period. But there were others who naturally, however hopelessly, struck with all their force at the enemies of the common people; especially after it had been discovered that the ruling caste, as has been invariably the case throughout history, rarely or never kept faith with their

subordinates in revolt. In some cases members of the nobility and their families were quite justly put to death for their crimes, and in many cases their castles, which were no better than dens of thieves and robbers, were looted and burnt to the ground. But taken as a whole, and considering the intolerable outrages—blinding of eyes, torture of every kind, and ruthless massacre where convenient—beside the tyranny to which they had been subjected, it is wonderful that the peasants and the townsfolk were so moderate in their treatment of their foes during the early months of 1525, when the movement was nearly everywhere successful. The peasants had been fortunate enough to secure an able and apparently honest general, in the person of the Knight Florian Geyer, whose policy in the town of Rothenburg was completely successful and brought over the whole people to the side of the peasants. But there was still no thorough and permanent discipline among the insurrectionary forces. The peasants everywhere miscalculated their strength, and in the absence of competent leaders ran wholly unwarranted risks. In short, notwithstanding their victories at the beginning of the movement, and the rallying of Mulhausen and other towns to the side of the "Evangelical Brotherhood," with the peasants generally, it is now easy to see that they could not have gained a permanent victory over their hereditary enemies and that the townspeople were as incapable as themselves.

Moreover, with the exception of Rohrbach and Pfeiffer, they appear to have found no thoroughly determined civilian leaders, while they did not entrust one of their military chiefs, Geyer, with supreme command; and Götz von Berlichingen, whom they forced into their service, betrayed them at the first convenient opportunity. The failure of the attack upon the important and to them practically impregnable fortress of Frauenburg, and the collapse of their forces at Mulhausen, accompanied and followed by other disasters all over Germany, discouraged the whole movement; while the return of the Imperial soldiery from Italy and the enlistment of ferocious mercenaries from the east of Europe, as well as of similar but possibly less butcherly bodies close at hand, put the nobles, with their Suabian League and ruthless general, in possession of irresistible forces. They used them in similar merciless fashion to that practised by their

brethren of the same class in France and England. Those of the peasants and townsfolk who were massacred wholesale with the utmost brutality, men, women and children, came off best. Details of what befell the others who were taken alive, especially those against whom the nobility and chivalry entertained special animosity, rival the tales of Red Indian torments. Breaking on the wheel, roasting slowly alive, the application of "the question," in its most horrible and lingering form, were common methods of high-minded vengeance of the same character as those practised by Richard II. and his barons, Charles the Bad, the Black Prince and other warriors of renown. Few prisoners underwent even the form of trial, and fully twenty thousand people in a single district, many of whom had taken no part whatever in the rising, were, according to the records of the time, slaughtered in twenty-four hours, often under circumstances of inconceivable atrocity. The class war, as then carried on by the chivalry of Germany, was as frightful in every way as the vengeance taken on the defeated slaves and peasants under the Roman Republic in Italy and Sicily and in Gaul. Mercy was unknown. Even now in Rothenburg the people point to the channels down which blood poured in streams when the day of the lords in that unfortunate township had fully come. It is, in short, impossible to exaggerate the crimes committed at the expense of the common folk by the Junkers of that day.

What adds to the sadness of this terrible story is the fact that Martin Luther, his associate Melanchthon and their friends, after having done much to adjure the peasants to overthrow their masters—Luther abusing the latter with a fury at least equal to that which he used towards his religious opponents—turned round upon the defeated peasants, and hounded the German nobility on to their monstrous cruelties. The hatred he showed towards these unfortunate serfs and peasants entirely destroys his reputation for humanity. There was no real desire on his part to raise mankind in this life. Melanchthon was even worse. Not content with aiding his friend of Wittenberg in his denunciation of the weak who did the work of the world while they were living, he actually went out of his way to misrepresent and vilify their leaders when they were dead. This proves that, with Protestant and religious subversionist, just as with Catholic reactionist, class goes for even more than creed. Holy men of

all religions have been found on the side of the most ruthless persecutors of the people.

But much as we may detest the frightful deeds of the Duke of Saxony and the scarcely less frightful incitations to murder of Luther, no amount of righteous indignation can conceal from us the truth that the peasants' war of Germany failed, not because of the ruthlessness of the nobles, the lack of discipline of the peasants and poorer townsmen, or the bitter animosity against them of the men of God. It failed because the class in revolt had not reached the stage where its economic and social emancipation was possible. Had they won in the field, what would they have done in the Council Chamber? Their social defeat would only have been delayed a few years from their sheer incapability of holding their ground in economics. Their insurrection was in every way but that fully justifiable.

On the other hand, we must admit that the terrible manner in which the rising was crushed did help to throw back the social development of Germany, and this was still further crippled by the Thirty Years' War and its widespread devastations. The emancipation of the serfs of Germany was hindered, not hastened, by the force of the peasants at the beginning and the greater force of the nobles at the end. Yet, convinced as we may be of this law of unseen economic advance in all Western communities, that anticipation of social events by armed action cannot give freedom to the class whose members have not been prepared for the transformation by changes irrespective of their volition or consciousness, nevertheless we cannot withhold our sympathy and admiration from these uneducated and untrained champions of the people who, in England, France, Germany and other countries, kept alive, by their courage and self-sacrifice, the aspirations of mankind towards liberty in days of misery and despair. Their defeats made ready the road to complete victory generations or centuries after they themselves had been slaughtered.

## CHAPTER XXI

## THE ENGLISH BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

THERE is no part of English history which has been regarded with more satisfaction by the middle class of our day than the great Civil War against Charles I. The whole thing is so stirring, so thorough-going, so complete, so orbicular. It has, moreover, that comforting savour of godliness about it which sanctifies victory and almost justifies massacre. Man, wrote James Mill, made God in his own image. Never was this done more agreeably to the worshippers calling stoutly upon Providence to help them, than by the grim fighters who, on land and on sea, in England and on the continent of Europe, made all their enemies flee before them. Their God was unquestionably the God of Battles; and his special representatives on earth hewed the Agag of the seventeenth century in pieces before the Lord with truly Hebraic unction. "You English," said Karl Marx once to me, "like the Romans in many things, are most like them in your ignorance of your own history."

The history of the real revolution of the seventeenth century in Great Britain has been written, as a rule, so exclusively from the standpoint of the Parliament, that few give thought to the condition of the mass of the people during the struggle between the Commons—that is, the middle classes—and the King. The whole story from the side of the victorious class has been told so often and so well that there is no need even to summarise it here. Charles I. mistook his period and failed to recognise the strength of his opponents. Moreover, he, like his father, had a God of his own, who, he was convinced, was on the side of divine right, ordained and sanctified from on high. There were, in fact, two Gods as well as two armies in the field. This being so, he felt it unnecessary to turn for support to the people, as at times Henry VIII. and Elizabeth did, even when they were butchering vagrants wholesale and looking on at the extrusion of tillers from the land. His claim to autocracy was so surely based that the dexterous popularity-hunting of the Tudors was

out of date. This would not have changed the result in the long run; but had the advice of Wentworth been taken in the matter of a standing army, and the landless men been propitiated by promises of better treatment, the conflict might have lasted many more years.

Here, however, obviously, the class which was socially ready to assert its right to increasing control secured practically all that it strove for in the department of finance and economics, not so much by its victories in the field, remarkable as those were, or by its intellectual superiority, as by the relentless pressure of historic causes. In spite of Cromwell's despotic action, by which at the close of his career he set aside all the parliamentary freedoms he had previously upheld, and established military domination with a standing army and its generals much after the fashion recommended by Strafford to his sovereign; notwithstanding the restoration of the Stuart dynasty under Charles II., and its continuance under James II. and Mary, with her husband William of Orange, the middle class lost nothing that it had gained by the stalwart fanaticism of the highly respectable, if sometimes hypocritically ascetic Puritans. From "the crowning mercy" of Worcester onwards, the merchant, the banker, the trader, the capitalist farmer steadily made way. Not until the middle and end of the nineteenth century did this progress manifest itself in the acquisition of virtually complete political control. But from 1680 to 1914 capitalism gradually became master of English policy at home and abroad. The aristocracy and the landowners, though dexterously maintaining their rights and their political influence, only did so by slowly becoming sleeping partners with the owners of capital in their exploitation of the masses of the working people.

The growth of this powerful profiteering class during the seventeenth century in England is one of the most remarkable features of European history. There was nothing at first to show that this country would gain the position in world commerce which it shortly afterwards did, nor could anyone have predicted a century later that it would for a time lead the world in capitalist production. Other countries seemed more advanced than England. The Netherlands, and France especially, whose power of colonisation preceded and surpassed the English

adventurers, seemed more likely to succeed, while Spain's decline was not so manifest as it shortly afterwards became. Strange as it may appear, the ruin of the mass of the people helped on the development of the wealthy. Cromwell himself, repeating Seneca without knowing it, exclaimed against the few rich who made many poor. But once begun, the process was bound to continue its work to the end.

Under the rule of the Tudors, as has been seen, England changed from a country where in the main the majority lived on their own land, were happy, contented, well-fed and well-clothed, producing and working up enough food and raw material for their own use and thinking little of exchange, into a country where people were gradually being driven off the soil, their ancient rights destroyed, their means of production and their land taken by others—a country where exchange for profit was becoming the rule of the time. A propertyless people, compelled to work for the farmer's profit, or forced to compete with one another in the cities for wages to keep body and soul together, was replacing to a large extent the sturdy yeomen, craftsmen and free labourers of the old days. Pauperism became an integral portion of the English social system, and the lot of the many one never-ending servitude under the guise of freedom. In these days the origin of the degrading division of labour and the monotony of our long mechanical toil, so scathingly denounced by Adam Smith, are to be found. Meanwhile farmers, traders, and manufacturers grew wealthy, and the name of England was made great in Europe: the foundations of her commercial preponderance and naval supremacy were laid.

The change in the method of production, though still in its infancy during the early part of the seventeenth century, was of the highest importance. Instead of the isolated labourer on the land or in the workshop there were henceforth an increasing number of wage-earners, without any means of tilling or producing by themselves, toiling under one employer who himself owned the means of production and took the whole product as his property. This, cruel as were its effects upon the majority of the workers, was a necessary step towards bringing about the full institution of that social labour, divorced from the ownership of its own tools, which is essential to all wage-earning production on a large scale. But it shuts out more and more from

the workman the chance which he had before of becoming a master craftsman and an employer himself, while the deprivation of ownership of the soil brings about the same result for the labourer on the land. Both now work for the profit of a class above them and economically antagonistic to them. For the business of agriculture, like the business of manufacture, is now carried on by persons of capital (Statute 43, Elizabeth).

The capitalist becomes one, not because he is an organiser of labour—the Roman villicus was no capitalist—but he grows into an organiser of labour because he is a capitalist, and wishes to make his capital fructify by means of profit. Hence the tendency, very slow at first, more rapid afterwards, to increase the scale of operations, the size of workshops, the number of men employed by one master, and, consequently, the amount of capital needed to start on good terms with others, to build workrooms, to purchase raw materials, etc. A radical change in the very nature of the work done takes place by dividing the labour into sections and splitting up the trades. It is no longer merely an extension of the simple handicraft of the Middle Ages, bringing more workers together; it is a direct attack upon the whole local arrangements and restrictions of the old time. Commerce first, and then manufactures, greatly increased by the influx of foreign capitalists and highly skilled labourers, combined with aggression, exploration, slavery and piracy to give England her initial advantages in the competition for wealth for the trading and capitalist class which followed. Usury laws, protective duties, monopolies, interference by the State on behalf of the workpeople in their "free contract" with the dominant master-class were the expiring efforts of the fading Middle Age polity to cope with the capitalist growth, national and international, and to prevent it from benefiting one class alone. They had little permanent effect against the purely pecuniary and personal struggle of the rising class against the working people.

All this change did, in fact, turn to the advantage of one class and one class alone. And the enormous improvements which were going on in every department at the same time told steadily in favour of the same class. There never was such a period of rapid transformation before, through all the long annals of mankind. In agriculture and in trade, in arts, mechanics, chemistry, in every branch of science, in banking, commercial

organisation, shipping, navigation, colonies, fisheries—in all of these steps forward were taken, exceeding far in importance any advances that had been made for hundreds and even thousands of years. The benefits of these inventions, discoveries, expansions and transformations fell exclusively into the hands of the few; while the misery of the people was such that their numbers had actually decreased during this time of superabundant prosperity. A slight change for the better set in later, owing to the growth of the towns through this increase of manufacture and trade, which created a demand for more cereals, raised the price of corn, rendered tillage more profitable and reduced the sheep demesnes within reasonable limits, causing a demand for more agricultural labourers; while the introduction of the turnip husbandry and artificial grasses gave at the same time a great stimulus to agriculture generally. But the mischief had been done, so far as the people were concerned, and there was no improvement in the position of the workers in town or country at all comparable with the wealth which had been piled up for the minority.

Throughout the seventeenth century the status of the labourer was bad in every respect. His cottage was wretched and had no land around it; the price of food had risen out of all proportion to his increase of wages in town and country alike. In 1622 the rural districts were described as "pitifully pestered with poor and lusty labourers, who, because no man would be troubled with their service, begged, filched and stole for maintenance." Sir Matthew Hale, whom Cromwell appointed to try to introduce some sort of order into chaotic law, confirms this nearly forty years later, after the complete defeat of the Royalist party. He writes: "There are many poor who are able to work if they have it at reasonable wages, by which they could support themselves and their family which oftentimes are many." In the preamble to Statute 13, Charles II., cap. 12, the growing necessities, number and continual increase of the poor are dwelt upon. This was in 1662. Five and thirty years later one half of the people relieved under the Poor Law were able-bodied, and might easily have maintained themselves if they had got any useful work to do. But that is precisely what they could not obtain. They could not obtain remunerative employment, that is to say, either under Charles I., Cromwell or Charles II.,

although England as a whole was becoming richer and richer. This wealth was accumulated in the hands of a small minority of the population. "The trade of the world," of which the founder of English political economy wrote, was pouring its profits into their lap, and the socialised method of production under capitalism was being prepared and carried on. This could only find a satisfactory outlet in such a world market, especially since the difficulty of transport, owing to the breakdown of roads, restricted the home market for bulky goods, which could much more easily and cheaply be conveyed by sea.

Here then, if the poverty of the poor contrasted cruelly with the increased wealth of the rich, if the inability to obtain employment even at a barely living rate of wages, if the deprivation of the mass of the people of the ownership of their own soil, if the great and bitter discontent prevailing in town and country —if all these causes were by themselves adequate to create a revolution, unquestionably our revolution of the seventeenth century would have come from the working and not from the trading or bourgeois class. But this, of course, was not the case. The revolution sprang from those who were not only well-to-do, but were increasing year by year in prosperity.

Moreover, whatever gloss middle-class historians put upon it, the fact remains that, in spite of all the fine sentiments with which it was garnished, the great struggle of the Parliament against the King was a pecuniary conflict. The bourgeoisie was touched in its most sensitive place—its pocket. The King and his counsellors, vainly imagining that the regal authority, built up into little short of despotism by the Tudors, might be stretched to an indefinite length, were foolish enough to tax the strongest economic class in the kingdom, without going through the proper constitutional forms. It was a fatal mistake. The Royalists altogether failed to understand that they were acting in opposition to an inevitable social transformation. So the god of the monarchy, with its semi-Catholic Anglicanism, fell before the god of the purse, with its individualist Puritanism. But the condition of the people went relatively from bad to worse below, throughout the whole period of disturbance. During the Wars of the Roses the common folk came largely by their own; during the wars of King and Parliament they gained nothing whatever. They showed their feeling towards both sides, where

they could, by impartially clubbing to death on the field of battle Royalists and Parliamentarians indiscriminately.

We can scarcely blame them. Both sides were their enemies. A political and economic struggle above, however bloody, party writing, however eloquent—and who will ever forget the noble pamphlet on the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing—affect not at all the relentless economical pressure upon the producing class below. Let those who will talk of freedom of speech, freedom of person, freedom of contract; what are all these mock liberties worth to those who have but the freedom to work as wage slaves their life long, to starve with their families or to turn paupers? What do the names of Milton or Marvell, Eliot, Hampden, Vane, Fairfax or Cromwell mean to the poor bowed-down hind, or city wage-earner, forced by the economical ordinances of his time to stumble along, half clothed and half fed, from his pauper cradle to his pauper grave? History is regardless of him, the political economist or statesman passes him by on the other side, whilst the misery of yesterday furnishes forth the misery of to-day, and the dispossessed vagrants of the Tudors and Stuarts hand on their heritage of suffering to the hopeless proletariat of the next generation.

The Tudors had established in Great Britain during a period of transition a system of monarchical rule not widely different from that which Richelieu and Mazarin created for the kings of France, though the economic conditions below were not on the same plane at all. That was the point at which Charles and his admirers blundered; there arose the opportunity which gave the Parliamentary leaders and Cromwell, both before and after the decapitation of the King, their power. Some of those leaders were genuine Republicans of an oligarchic type; others honestly believed that the class to which they belonged had all the wisdom and piety in the island; others, again, like Ireton and his fellow lawyer-generals, were democrats in their way. But not one of them, nor all of them together, could hold their own against the curiously complex, crafty and ruthless character which lay behind the fanaticism of Cromwell. He was able to gratify his ambition and determination to be master of them all because, in direct contradiction to what he said of himself, he knew quite early in his career of self-aggrandisement where he was going and how he would get there. Cromwell

never at any time had any scruples whatever. If he thought it politically judicious to massacre, he massacred. If he believed that for the time being it was to his interest to play the part of the whole-souled Parliamentarian, he played it. If he felt that to encourage doctrines of equality among his soldiery would bind them more closely to him, he was as thorough-going a Fifth-Monarchy man as the most raving enthusiast in his army. If he found, on the contrary, that this sort of militarist fanaticism might be dangerous to himself, he dealt sternly enough with his devotees of yesterday. From the moment he discovered that none of his possible rivals possessed the politico-warlike qualities that were combined in his person, he threw overboard every opinion and was false to every pledge that might encumber him in his upward climb.

His execution of the King, who, assuredly, well deserved his fate, is sometimes spoken of as a blunder. It was nothing of the kind. Foreign statesmen made no mistake on that head. They understood from that moment that Cromwell, so long as he lived, was the only man in England with whom they had to reckon. Brutal and merciless as he was, butchering his thousands at Drogheda and Wexford, dooming his prisoners to slow starvation, and transportation to frightful slavery in the West Indies, after his victories at Dunbar and Worcester, Cromwell was always the thorough representative of the English well-to-do landowning, farming and profiteering class. Sympathy with democracy and freedom he had none. That the labourers should be on terms of equality with landowners and farmers was to him an outrageous proposition. So the revolution of the class to which he belonged was carried through entirely in the interest of that class; and the rule that victory is for the class whose triumph has been economically prepared beforehand, by a series of historic events, was once more verified in this great conflict.

But a section of those Englishmen who overthrew the monarchy resented the high-handed methods of the Parliament and the tyranny of Cromwell as much as they did the ecclesiastical ruffianism, the Star Chamber atrocities and the irresponsible tax-gathering of Charles. Their grand resistance to illegality and injustice has been for the most part passed over with contemptuous indifference by English historians. The militarists were successful, so their crimes are carefully belittled;

while the heroic actions of John Lilburne, Wildman, Overton, Saxby and their friends of "The Agreement of the People" and "England's New Chains," have been sneered at, or the record of their works and trials suppressed. Yet there is no finer character in English history than Colonel John Lilburne. Unjustly and inhumanly condemned to degrading punishments by the persecuting Anglican bigots under the Monarchy, every possible effort was made to secure his legal condemnation to death under the Republic. A large bench of judges was specially constituted in order to ensure a verdict against him; he was refused the right to employ counsel. When completely exhausted by his endeavours to prevent the bench from depriving him of all chance of a favourable verdict by their legal chicane, he was forced to make his defence then and there. Constantly interrupted and brow-beaten by the suborned bench throughout, his speech was as fine both legally and oratorically as any ever delivered from the dock. This was in 1649, when England was supposed to be living under the rule of justice and freedom. Lilburne's sole and only offence was that he had vigorously and unceasingly upheld English liberties, as decreed by the House of Commons and recorded on the Statute Book. In spite of all the indecent efforts of his judges to force the jury to convict him and thus bring him to the gallows, the jurymen one and all found him "Not Guilty" on all counts of the indictment charged and enforced against him by the Attorney-General, with the relentless prosecution conducted from the Bench.

This verdict was really far more important than the acquittal of the Seven Bishops under James II. It was acclaimed by the audience in court with such fervour that the unjust judges were in the utmost terror, and evidently feared that they might not escape with their lives. All London echoed with cheering when the result was known. No wonder. Lilburne was tried for his life, under the circumstances recounted, simply and solely because he and his associates demanded that the discredited Parliament should at once be dissolved, that the elections to the House of Commons should take place once in two years, that all male tax-payers should have the vote, and that the great discrepancies in voting strength should be remedied. It was, in short, an advanced political reform programme. But there were other proposals of the so-called "Levellers," with whom General Ireton himself sympathised and even co-operated, which tended

to reduce also not only political but property inequalities. These were the measures which infuriated Parliament and evoked the denunciations of Cromwell, whose ambitions to attain despotic power Lilburne had been the first to detect and warn his countrymen against. It was evident, from the military mutinies in many districts, that a large portion of the army was favourable to the programme of the Levellers and quite ready to support an organised movement for genuine political and social reform. But their expressions of dissatisfaction were crushed by Cromwell, who saw in the disciplined Levellers his most formidable opponents.

Thus the discontent of the mass of the people counted for nothing and the protests of the soldiery were of no avail. Lilburne himself after his acquittal was not even released, as according to all law and justice he ought to have been. He was taken back to the Tower under a strong armed guard and for years afterwards was harassed by constant persecution.

His career, and that of the men who worked with him, affords fair proof that the bourgeois heroes of the anti-monarchical conflict, when once they felt themselves strong enough, cared as little about the freedom for which they nominally fought as the Royalists themselves. Having secured these particular liberties which benefited themselves and asserted their economic mastery, the well-being and fair representtion of the rest of the community so little concerned them that they resorted to the most shameful means in order to prevent the really oppressed class from obtaining a hearing. The English bourgeoisie had won its great revolution and from this time forward, whatsoever king did reign, they were determined to maintain their predominance. They, whose descendants talk so glibly against the idea of a class war between the people and themselves, and deprecate any resort to force, were the first traders in Europe to persuade a monarch, judicially, to part from his head. The superficial political revolution of 1688 was of little importance compared with the real revolution forty years earlier. Charles II. and the long roll of foreign monarchs who succeeded him have been careful not to run counter to the interests of the English middle class, who thenceforth were, in the main, masters of English policy at home and abroad. Not, however, until some two hundred years after did they achieve acknowledged political domination. So slowly do events move.

## CHAPTER XXII

## THE FRENCH BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

From the rising of the Jacquerie in 1358 to the calling together of the National Assembly in 1789, France had passed through the development of her social system, from a congeries of great and small more or less independent feudal territories, to France as a nation under one autocratic monarch. A succession of civil and religious wars kept the country in never-ending turmoil, until a great central organisation in Paris, with the King at its head, arose out of the long struggle between the Crown and the nobility. Louis XI., Henry IV., Richelieu and Mazarin prepared the way for the virtual despotism of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. But during the whole of the four hundred and forty years which separated the days of Etienne Marcel and Charles the Bad from the time of Louis XVI. and Robespierre—a period longer than that covered by the Roman Empire in its strength—agriculture had undergone little change, and the position of the peasantry remained much what it had been. Although the more rigorous forms of serfdom had slowly fallen into desuetude, production on the land remained, as it had been for thousands of years, the most important industry.

The Court and the aristocracy had meanwhile lost touch with the mass of the people. There had been no meeting of the States General for more than five whole generations (1613-1789). Instead of feudal lords living upon their estates and fulfilling, however badly, their legal functions in the society of the epoch, the great landowners had for the most part become mere hangers-on of the Court, participating in its waste and extravagance, and employing agents and bailiffs on the spot to exact from the peasant tenantry the last farthing in the way of dues. Their own continuous impoverishment rendered them the harshest of landlords from a distance; while their continuous absenteeism, drawing away the substance of the people from the provinces to the metropolis, not only destroyed all direct

personal relations between the nobility and the people on their estates, but intensified the economic drawbacks of a system that was rapidly falling into decay from other causes.

Such was the state of affairs over the greater part of France. Where the landlords still resided upon their properties, as in La Vendée and districts of Southern France, both the economic position and the social relations were less strained, as was apparent even in the worst crises of the Revolution. But during the latter portion of the reign of Louis XIV., and the whole of the reign of Louis XV., matters went steadily from bad to worse for the bulk of the peasantry. A few of the cultivators improved their status, and the middle class was strengthening its position in the cities, towns and communes. But the mass of the agriculturists became poorer and poorer; land was actually going out of cultivation to an extent which in numerous districts meant ruin for Government and people alike; many of the poverty-stricken semi-serfs, compelled to abandon their holdings, tramped in misery along the highways and sought refuge in the towns; while, in the period immediately preceding the crucial years from 1784 to 1789, a series of bad harvests desolated France and brought actual famine to the poor both in country and town.

At the same time, the public debt had swollen to enormous proportions, and the deficit in the annual budget of the Government increased year by year: a debt which there was no means whatever of reducing, and a deficit which could not possibly be avoided under the legal system of taxation then in vogue. For the middle class, who acquired their money by trade and money-lending, and the impoverished tillers of the soil, bore the whole burden of the national imposts. The nobility and the clergy, who, between them, held practically the whole of the landed property of France, were entirely exempted from taxation, and the lawyers, a most powerful social group, then as ever, under the domination of private property, also escaped taxation very frequently.

Such a method of government as that of the *ancien régime*, going on under these conditions from generation to generation, must sooner or later break down. Economic and social causes work slowly forward to their inevitable end, regardless of the persons engaged in consciously or unconsciously aiding or obstructing their development. Threatened classes rarely foresee,

or, if a few foresee, they are unable to meet circumstances by the prompt and capable legislation which can alone preserve themselves from overthrow. This was certainly the case with the nobility and landowners generally before the French Revolution. There were warnings all round that dangerous movements were inevitable, unless strong measures were promptly taken to meet the growing demands and resentment of the Tiers Etat, the rising middle class, and the formidable upheavals of the neglected and despised Fourth Estate—the peasants. The long and increasingly serious succession of peasant insurrections, from the early days of the reign of Louis XVI., though superficially they seemed merely an exaggerated form of the local revolts against oppression which had been going on for many centuries, were, for careful observers from abroad, clear evidence that this almost universal outbreak might easily develop into definite social revolution. Subversive ideas filtering down from above, and the reflex action of this continuous and furious material unrest going on below, made ready the whole social structure for a complete change. It might even have appeared that the manifest intention of the peasants to obtain entirely new conditions of existence would secure for them, as by far the most numerous and important portion of the population, the dominant influence, when the Revolution itself should be the outcome of their spasmodic attacks.

But, as even historians and essayists who most sympathise with the just claims of the toiling agriculturists now freely admit, this could not be. Why? Because, unlike the Tiers Etat, the peasants were not ready as a class to take up their historic rôle of emancipation. They knew what they wanted to get rid of, but they were not competent to administer the new forms which would reflect their own economic supremacy, should they succeed in obtaining it. As will be seen, therefore, they succeeded wholly in the destructive, but only partially in the constructive, side of such policy as they formulated. The Tiers Etat, or bourgeoisie, on the other hand, though they also may not have laid down consciously a complete plan of action in the event of success, did understand perfectly well that administration in their own interest must inevitably follow legislation in their own interest. They had arrived at the stage where they could easily fill all the posts then occupied by the nobility and the King's

nominees; and they never forgot that, when they had secured full possession of private property, and equality so far as the right to compete freely without any embarrassing restrictions, they had virtually won all that they most desired to win.

This accounts first for the extraordinary moderation of the bourgeoisie in the early stages of the Revolution, when once they had made themselves the indispensable leaders of the National Assembly, and posed as voicing the national aspirations. It accounts also for the determination, and even fury, with which they attacked the peasantry when these, to the bourgeoisie, misguided and ignorant folk, threatened to shake the foundations of private property altogether by destroying the chateaux, burning public documents, sweeping away all feudal dues of every kind, resuming the communal lands seized by the nobility, and dividing up the Church lands. The Revolution to them meant simply the conquest of political and economic power directly or indirectly by the Tiers Etat. "What is the Tiers Etat?" asked the Abbé Siéyès. "Nothing." "What should it be?" "Everything." That summed up all the law and all the prophets for the French bourgeoisie.

Below the fine phrases of the French revolutionary orators and the high ideals with which some of them were inspired, we come always upon the sordid considerations of hard cash. From the very commencement, with only one or two aristocratic exceptions, the real leaders of the National Assembly and the Revolution were members of the Tiers Etat. They were in the grip of middle-class ideals. Mirabeau, Danton, Robespierre, the Girondins, the whole of the principal orators and organisers, with the exception of Marat, Anacharsis Clootz and Chaumette, Le Roux, L'Ange, and later Babœuf, were tight bound in the trammels of bourgeois thought and private property conceptions. The peasantry, who constituted the bulk of the population, were not directly represented in the National Assembly at all, and indirectly only to a very small and inefficient extent. The same with the artisans and men driven from the land into the towns. These people exercised great pressure from without through the Commune of Paris, and other friendly and partially affiliated communes throughout the country. But it was only by such pressure, and by very threatening attacks from the peasants under arms, that the factions in the National Assembly

were driven to enforce the practical measures passed by their own Assembly. These measures were accompanied by such restrictions, in the shape of heavy cash payments by the peasantry in return for the removal of the old feudal abuses and tyrannies, that the enactments themselves were mainly rendered nugatory. As a matter of fact, the National Assembly itself passed law after law extending these restrictions, and insisting that the peasants should pay the feudal dues claimed and perform customary work. More than this, when the peasants took the enforcement of the original vote of the Assembly into their own hands, attacked the chateaux, endeavoured to seize and burn the feudal titles in the communal and municipal archives, and refused to let the agents of the landlords collect money from them or extort services from them, the bourgeoisie actually took up arms against them as "brigands." The peasants were, then, not citizens who were asserting their rights, as unanimously voted in 1789 by the Assembly, but gangs of robbers who desired to interfere with those sacred rights of private property which were as dear to the Tiers Etat as to the privileged classes. Naturally enough, the peasants refused to accept frequent defeats, and even multitudinous hangings and torturings, as decisive; and the true revolutionists of Paris, Lyons, Marseilles and other towns sympathised with them and used their influence to support their revolts. It is, in fact, beyond all question that, though the National Assembly at first voted with immense enthusiasm for doing away root and branch with the entire feudal system, the same Assembly at once set to work to pass laws in direct contravention of their own resolution. The following dates show what occurred.

On 4th August 1789 the abolition of the entire feudal system was joyfully and unanimously voted in principle by the Assembly; while at the same time mortmain, the game laws—which were very onerous—and private seigneurial courts of justice were abrogated. These were immense reforms, which meant a great and pacific revolution for the benefit of the whole agricultural population.

But, at the end of 1789 and the beginning of 1790, laws were passed by the same Assembly which reconstituted and confirmed nearly all the old abuses, and decreed that any advantages accruing to the peasants by the vote of 4th August should be

fully paid for by them, to the landowners, at their value in money.

Peasants who refused to accept this law and would not pay for the removal of injustice were treated again as malefactors, and were harried by the forces of the municipalities. If they rose in revolt against this improper action they were treated legally with little short of the same brutality and cruelty as had been the lot of their ancestors for thousands of years.

The Feudal Commission appointed by the Assembly did all that was possible to compel the peasants to pay their old feudal dues. Things became worse rather than better. More and more the reactionists harried the peasantry with stringent enactments; more and more the peasantry retaliated against their oppressors, doing their utmost to crush their enemies in successive risings.

Not until four full years had passed since the first declaration of the annulment of the feudal rights and customs did the complete defeat of all the reactionary forces in Paris and other important towns cause these feudal iniquities to be swept away without redemption and without any possibility of resuscitation. But for the overthrow of the monarchy and its supporters, including the eloquent but reactionary Girondins, the final removal of a system which, as all can now see, had long outlasted its period of even partial usefulness, might have dragged on for some years more.

It is well to understand thoroughly this portion of the revolutionary movement, because apologists for the *ancien régime*, and bitter opponents of the French Revolution in every shape, carefully overlook the many efforts made by the reactionaries of various kinds to restrict the application of all real peaceable reforms, and to change the old method as little as possible. It was this persistent policy of counter-revolution, working steadily on, openly in the Assembly and the clubs, secretly in the underground coteries, which exasperated all who desired to bring about thorough-going changes and drove them to extreme courses. For the object of the Court and its agents and sympathisers was to prevent the execution of measures already accepted, as well as to arrest the course of inevitable change.

The time was fully ripe for three great transformations: the passing of economic and political power to the Tiers Etat and

the bourgeoisie, the destruction of the old feudal ties, and the transference of the land to the cultivators. To check this revolution, so fully and unconsciously prepared in the course of previous centuries, was quite impossible. But those who opposed its development naturally forced the other side to try for more than was then economically or socially attainable; and these efforts, in turn, fortified reaction, and finally produced a military dictatorship.

Nothing but the actual figures of taxation and impoverishment can give a clear conception of the true state of France from the accession of Louis XVI. onwards. That some districts were better off than others, being favoured in the matter of fiscal imposts, is well known. In these areas a fair amount of prosperity might be observed generally, even among the smallest proprietors, accompanied by that sprightly demeanour and obvious enjoyment of life which distinguish the majority of the French people, when once freed from grinding anxiety, excessive toil and continuous hardship. It is also true that a few of the peasantry themselves, throughout the provinces, had succeeded in rising above the level of their fellows, just as some of the slaves of old time became even rich under still more arduous conditions for the mass of the slave class, or as wage-earners have been able, occasionally, to acquire wealth and become capitalists. But these were exceptional cases; and it is certain that the very men who had thus partially emancipated themselves were those who were most active in leading their fellow-peasants to attack and destroy the old oppressive feudal system.

The general taxation, and the manner in which it was extorted by the farmers-general of the revenue, constituted by itself a crushing burden, apart from the feudal dues and servitudes. So excessive was the weight of this taxation upon the agriculturists that, in districts where the valuation was strictly made, and the payments were rigorously exacted, assuming the produce of an acre to be worth £3, 2s. 7d., the proportion which went to the Crown was £1, 18s. 4d., the landlord took 18s., the actual cultivator being left with only 5s. Or if the land were cultivated by the peasant owner himself, his share was only £1, 4s. 3d., while the Crown still took £1, 18s. 4d. Thus, if the produce of an acre had been divided into twelve parts, nearly seven and a half of such parts went to the Crown, three and a half to the

landowner and only one to the actual cultivator. The *taille* and the *vingtième* imposts affecting agricultural labour exclusively and rising in proportion to its returns – with other smaller burdens amounted to £6,840,000 a year. The taxes on consumption amounted to £10,400,000 a year. Hence the small proprietors, who had practically no appeal against such crushing imposts, since the intendants and the courts of justice were all at the disposal of the Crown, had been compelled in several departments to abandon their tillage altogether; and, as already noted, to crowd propertyless into the large and small towns, with no means of subsistence save what they could gain by selling their labour power to the rising middle class.

It has been stated on good authority that, in some provinces, more than half the land was derelict, owing to the impossibility of paying the taxes and dues, and leaving any margin to support the cultivator and his family. Miserably poor, with little hope of bettering their lot—such was the constitution of the mass of the French people. The social relations were as harsh as the economic. The absentee nobles hanging round the Court still regarded their tenants, in most provinces, as mere beasts of burden, whose sole right to existence consisted in supplying their lords and masters with the means of elegant waste: the peasants looked upon the King's tax-gatherers, and also the landowners with their agents and bailiffs, as men who directly and brutally robbed them of the fruits of their labour—in short, as blood-suckers of the foulest type, ever ready to resort to tyranny and torture when payments fell due and were not discharged. This feeling the unfortunate tillers of the soil took with them into the towns, when stress of circumstances and actual famine drove them starving from their fields and huts; and it was their furious resentment and lust for vengeance which largely accounted for the ferocity displayed. There is no need to imagine special breeds of murderers deliberately imported from without for purposes of massacre in Paris and other great cities. Plenty of men and women fired with justifiable hatred were already on the spot. In the country, naturally, the class animosity was quite as bitter. The peasants were getting power, but bad harvests brought famine; their worst enemies were close at hand in the persons of the agents of their landowner and in the chateaux, which the latter rarely visited, though his game

ravaged their fields and ruined their crops. Consequently, abominable as were the communications, utterly uneducated as were the mass of the people, impossible as was any thoroughly centralised organisation for the specific purposes of revolt, ignorant as nearly all the districts and communes were of what was occurring in the metropolis, the indisputable truth remains that, though the peasants were destitute of arms, the same causes produced similar effects, and resulted in the like attacks upon the nobility over nearly the whole of France. Nothing but a mass of serious and unendurable economic and social oppressions could have produced discontent so general and hatred so implacable.

But this same discontent and hatred could not of themselves have brought about the Revolution, had not the entire system been worn out. In the early days of Louis XIV., for example, though there were bitter grievances at the beginning of his monarchy, in spite of capable management of the finances, and even in the latter part of his reign, when successful and unsuccessful wars had well-nigh ruined the entire country, such a movement could not have been carried on with any hope of victory. The old forms, economic, social, political and religious, were still effective, and seemed permanent for the mass of the people. The same may be said of the greater part of the reign of Louis XV. Upheaval was possible, revolts were frequent, but the monarchy and nobility still stood firm. Nor when, as we can now see, everything was ready for a great change did the most capable French observers really anticipate what soon afterwards occurred. So advanced and shrewd a man as the Socialist Abbé Mably said, only five years before the fall of the Bastille: "The revolution will never come."

Nothing, also, could have been more moderate than the demands in the list of grievances set forth by the peasantry from the various provinces. In this moderation they followed the example of the bourgeoisie. The King was actually popular, and was looked to as the source of reforms against the nobles. A careful study of the rise and spread of the revolutionary spirit shows clearly that, determined as the Tiers Etat was to assert itself, when once the political outlet was opened which had been closed for a hundred and seventy-five years, the mass of the people had little idea of their own power: so little that a powerful

monarch or a bold statesman might have brought about, peacefully and effectively, greater and more beneficial changes than those which the eight years of revolutionary turmoil eventually secured. But this has, hitherto, been the invariable course of events in European movements, political and social, successful and unsuccessful; the dominant minority has never been able to meet inevitable developments with sagacity and courage. "Nous étions des lâches," replied one of the aristocratic emigrants at Coblenz, to a friend who asked him why they had failed to stay the revolutionary current and direct it into fertilising channels. And this was true. Not that the nobles were physical cowards. They and their womenkind showed marvellous personal intrepidity throughout, under circumstances where temporary breakdown might have been excusable. But moral cowards they unquestionably were. They dared not, like the Daimios and Samurai of Japan, recognise that they had outlived their epoch and lead their countrymen at what appeared great personal sacrifice into the inevitable new period. They fell, not because they and the Court were extravagant, wasteful, lascivious, corrupt and cruel. They had been all this for generations. Their overthrow was due to the fact that they and their feudalism had become useless.

But the same could not be said of the King. At the commencement of his reign, when advised by Turgot and Malesherbes, and before he fell under the complete domination of the fatal foreign woman, Marie Antoinette, Louis XVI. displayed most of the qualities which our Charles I. had so wholly lacked. It may have been too late, as some say, to begin the removal of feudal rights in 1774-1776, but, quite clearly, the people did not think so. Opposed by the Parliament of landlords in his support of Turgot's measures for suppressing feudal abuses, the King, incensed at this selfish conduct and the similar policy pursued by the merchants, took the strong course of enacting definite edicts against the *corvée* and other wrongs inflicted of old upon the people, in a *Lit de Justice* of 12th March 1776. The opposition to the King's removal of this "barbarous slavery ruinous to the country-side" made Voltaire's "old blood boil in his old veins"; and he spoke of the King's *Lit de Justice* as "*le lit de bienfaisance*." Sir Robert Walpole wrote in similar terms, declaring that the resistance of

the Parliament to the admirable reforms proposed by MM. Turgot and Malesherbes was more scandalous than the most ferocious whim of despotism. Paris itself was widely illuminated by transparencies, proclaiming "Vive le roi et la liberté." The people in town and country went wild with delight when the news got round, and a few excesses were seized upon as evidence of the malign effect of all reform on the masses.

Two months later, on the 12th May 1776, the King, weakly giving way to the cabals of the nobility, and to the malefic influence of his wife, dismissed Turgot from the Court, Malesherbes having resigned before. Voltaire was dumbfounded at this victory of reaction. He wrote: "France would have been too fortunate. These two ministers united together would have performed miracles. I shall never console myself for having seen the birth and the death of the golden age which they were preparing for us." They came full butt up against all the vested interests and time-hallowed prejudices of their age—only thirteen years before the beginning of the Revolution—and were defeated by the greed and bigotry of the nobles, the rich men of the Tiers Etat and the Queen. Galiani's letter to Madame d'Epinay, quoted by M. Rocquain, sums up the situation: "We have arrived at the days of which Livy speaks: 'Such a period are we in that we can neither endure our ills nor their remedies.'"

It is well to remember, when we are shocked at the horrors of the Revolution, thus rendered certain by the madness of the reactionists and the weakness of the King, that the French peasants and workmen, the lower bourgeoisie and artisans, had long been systematically cheated and betrayed in the matter of reforms, before they were driven to resort to armed revolution. Louis XVI. had to choose between a domestic *coup d'état* in his house, followed by a direct alliance of the Crown with the mass of the people, or a surrender to foreign petticoat government and the uncontrolled domination of his worthless aristocracy. He made his choice and lost his head. From 1776 to 1789 were years of preparation for popular action, the full force of which, as said, was not understood even by the Tiers Etat and the people themselves. From the downfall of Turgot and Malesherbes, however, onwards, the Crown had really the sole option: *se soumettre ou se démettre*—to submit or resign. When the King apparently submitted he once more had the people with him;

when he persisted in lying and intriguing, the guillotine stood ready at his door. But his death and the removal of so many rich and poor citizens by the Red, and so very many more by the White Terror, were, when all is said, not strictly important incidents, regrettable though they were, in the great class war, which terminated in the economic and political victory of the bourgeoisie. The actual loss of life on both sides was quite trifling compared with that during the Napoleonic wars, and still less noteworthy than the butchery during the recent tremendous clash of arms. But, what is worth serious consideration at the present time is the fact that the Tiers Etat, or bourgeoisie, in France and in other countries, which was so bloodthirsty and relentless in pursuit of its own emancipation and dominance when once it obtained the mastery, preached assiduously peace, perfect peace, as the only justifiable method of obtaining any reforms for the disinherited class below, which constituted the bulk of the population. This is a very convenient, if hypocritical, form of pacifism.

But what the overwhelming majority of the population, the peasants of the country and the poor of the towns, eventually gained was acquired with great difficulty and at serious risk. After the first burst of revolutionary fervour, reaction, as all the world knows, made way steadily. Not only did the King and the Court, Lafayette and the leaders of the wealthy middle class, with the Girondins, turn against the people, but the invading Austrian and Prussian forces, encouraged from the Tuileries, and even from the Assembly itself, made sure that they would capture the French metropolis, relieve the French King from the control of his subjects, slaughter all the Jacobins and revolutionists generally, and restore the *ancien régime*. No reliance whatever could be placed upon the Assembly. The situation was most threatening at home and from without. Marat, whose character and conduct were first seriously defended by Bax, and a study of whose writings convinced Jaurès that this remarkable man had been shamefully traduced—even Marat, who had never lost heart in the most desperate situation, was in despair. Before the 10th August 1792 he seriously thought of leaving Paris, where he had been hunted about for several months. Yet the 10th August was the critical day of the whole Revolution. Had not the Commune of Paris

taken up the leadership of the people against the Court and the Convention, it is almost certain that reaction would have won, temporarily at least. But the butchery of the half-armed populace by the royal troops, the clear evidence of the growing strength and organisation of the monarchical party, the news from the eastern front of constant treachery by the chiefs of the old army, the wholesale devastation of territory carried on by the invading German-Austrian armies, roused once again the real revolutionary enthusiasm of 1789—and more.

How the French survived the desperate struggles between the growing strength of reaction and the reawakened zeal of the revolutionists, the counter-revolutionary risings in Lyons, Bordeaux and other cities, the terrific war of reprisals and extermination in La Vendée, where the greater part of the peasantry fought for Church and King, and were massacred wholesale by the revolutionists, the triumphant advance of the allied armies till checked at Valmy and Wattignies, the lack of funds to maintain the Republican forces and want of arms to equip them against the enemy from without and the royalist and bourgeois foes within—how the French nation continued to live through this terrible stress and strain is one of the marvels of that extraordinary period. But with the collapse of the monarchical resistance on 10th August, and the imprisonment of the royal family, a new spirit seems to have been breathed into the genuine Republican party. Through anarchy and upheaval the revolutionists fought on in the field and in the Assembly, until, in spite of the machinations of the Girondins and their middle-class supporters, they passed the great democratic constitution of 24th June 1793, which swept away finally and without compensation all the feudal claims, put an end to the monarchy, and placed power in the hands of the people. This was the high-water mark of the whole Revolution. Little was done afterwards. The excesses of the revolutionists in the provinces after their victories, the reign of terror in Paris itself, the furious personal animosities of the factions, the failure of the men in control to develop any high national policy of construction which the whole nation could grasp—all this played into the hands of those of the bourgeoisie who had made large fortunes out of the purchase of public lands with the issue of huge masses of paper money, and thus fortified the elements of disgust and

reaction in every way. With the fall of Robespierre and his friends on the 9th of Thermidor, these anti-revolutionary forces controlled by the well-to-do class, who feared nothing so much as the shock to private property—a feeling which, as we have seen, manifested itself very early in the Revolution—came into control and avenged themselves upon their enemies. Then, being incapable of mastering the military element, or of developing, in their turn, any clear and comprehensive policy, or even suppressing the active disappointment of a deluded people, they fell under the domination of a powerful military genius, who saved them their property at the expense of their liberty. But Napoleon himself, and the monarchist rulers of the old Bourbon family who followed him, could not put back the clock upon the dial of social development.

What the peasantry had gained they, in the main, kept. Even at the height of the ecclesiastical and monarchical power imposed upon France by the Allies in 1814 and 1815, it was impossible to recover for the dispossessed landowners a portion of the lost relics of serfdom and aristocratic privileges that had been abrogated in 1793. Nor can it be denied that the relief from the intolerable oppression of belated feudalism enabled France, rural France—which is, when all is said, the real France—to develop resources and produce agricultural wealth to an extent which astonished Europe. This it was which enabled her armies first to withstand and repel invasion, and then to sweep forward as conquerors on a mission which began as a revolutionary movement, proceeded as a succession of campaigns to obtain Imperial domination, and ended in favour of the kingship that had been so tragically dethroned.

But the peasants, whose stupendous toil and sacrifice gave France, by their labour at home and their prowess in the field, the first position in Europe, gained in the long run no complete emancipation from their penal servitude on the soil. Taxes and local dues still pressed hard upon them. The land is ever a hard task-master; and the antagonism between country and town is based, under the city rule of the middle class, upon a permanent clash of interests. Small owners, such as constitute the majority of the population of France, have, save under exceptional circumstances, all the drawbacks which result from agricultural tillage conducted at a mechanical disadvantage.

Overworked, parsimonious, conservative and at times reactionary, the small cultivators, with all their counterbalancing good qualities, have acted as a drag upon French progress for more than a hundred years. Not for eighty years was even a bourgeois republic definitely established. The French Revolution, as is now admitted even by its most strenuous applauders, secured but a small portion of those freedoms which its leaders and followers claimed for the mass of the people; nor has it fully succeeded in doing so up to this day.

For, over against the masses of the cultivators, determined to rid themselves of the feudal dues and servitudes at any cost, and resolved to obtain possession of the land, but seeing no further into the economic future than those two immediate reforms, stood the French bourgeoisie. This was the only class which was ready by education, organisation, knowledge of business and administrative training to take up and carry on the public services, to develop and extend the great money power, to substitute the pecuniary rule of the bankers, merchants, traders, capitalists, lawyers and professions generally for the personal domination of the feudal nobility and the landowners. They were out to make a revolution for the most selfish and sordid reasons. The object was not to gain freedom for all, but freedom for their own mastery of all the rest. Never in human history were great ideals prostituted to baser ends. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" is the glorious motto still inscribed on the buildings and banners of the French Republic. But what did those noble abstractions mean to the class triumphant in the French Revolution, the class whose members were its leaders throughout? Liberty to exploit by wage slavery and usury. Equality before laws enacted in the interest of the profiteers, and justice administered in accordance with their profiteering notions of fair play. Fraternity as a genial brotherhood of pecuniary exploitation. "The Rights of Man" deliberately perverted to the right to plunder under forms of equity.

Thus were the noble conceptions of high-minded idealists translated into the language of sordid capitalist life. But the real meaning of these fine words, under a higher system of society, still remains, behind their misapplication of yesterday and to-day. This some of the revolutionists, who were never-

theless devoted to private property, saw dimly, and the Communists of the period plainly proclaimed. There can be no social equality, that is to say, between the rich and the poor: no real equality between the full man and the fasting. There can be no liberty unless an ample supply of all necessaries and luxuries of life is permanently secured by light labour for all. There can be no fraternity where one class is able to squeeze unpaid labour out of the wage-earners, who possess nothing but their labour power to sell. It was the Communists, such as Babœuf, preaching these doctrines, whom the Republicans specially hated and finally shamefully guillotined. Their views, unrealisable as they were at the time, drove the whole set of profiteers headlong into the arms of reaction. Property was the one God of the middle-class leaders of the French Revolution. Their first names were classical, instead of Biblical, as with the English upsetters of the monarchy; but they worshipped Mammon with more whole-hearted assiduity than the Puritans and slaughtered Communists with far greater fervour than the Cromwellians dispatched Levellers. The views of Morelly, Mably, Le Roux, L'Ange, Chaumette and others were premature in the days of the French Revolution. But they only anticipated events. Their theories, not those of Rousseau and Marat, inspired men of action like the whole-souled and self-sacrificing hero, Blanqui, and laid the foundations of the more developed Communism of Fourier and the encyclopædic elaborations of the great St Simon.

Evolution, in the sociologic sense, was not understood, as we understand it, in the eighteenth century. Some still thought that it was possible to go back to the golden age of the past, where the domination of gold was unknown, instead of, as St Simon truly said, to the golden age of the future, where the fetishism of gold will be finally dethroned, and wealth will be communally appropriated and distributed for the benefit of each and all. It is the fashion, nowadays, to speak of all such as Utopian socialists: it would be as reasonable to gibe at the great Roger Bacon as a Utopian scientist. When Fourier declared, in 1825, that competition would inevitably find its logical term in monopoly: when, in 1802, Robert Owen stated that wealth, even with the powers then possessed by society, might easily be made as plentiful as water, if men would but combine and overmaster

the great machinery of production which controlled them: when, more than a hundred years earlier still, John Bellers pointed out that money frequently acted not as a means of exchange, but as a malefic hindrance to social production, by the necessity it imposed, in a society where exchange was dominant, of converting wares into cash—they each and all were truly scientific in their estimation of the facts of their period, and displayed a marvellous faculty of forecasting the future. It is easy to underrate the influence which such intelligent anticipations have had during the last century upon the practical efforts to advance into the new period. It is even remarkable that the Communists, who advocated "direct action" to bring about the changes which they desired and hoped to accomplish, took for granted, in their survey of the past, that man in society began with communism all over the world, as sociological investigations have now decided that he did. This was at the time an almost unverified hypothesis; and the idea of the "social contract," which had been deliberately outraged by the power of malice aforethought, was purely imaginary. Nevertheless such ideas have had widespread attraction for active agitators all over Europe, and in France have inspired many conspiracies and insurrections. They have also kept burning, in the heart of the proletariat of all the towns, that passionate devotion to democracy and equality which have constituted the French, and particularly the Parisians, the continuous leaders of modern social idealism. Their refusal to recognise failure or to accept defeat have been of incalculable value to their noble and enduring cause.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## THE FORERUNNERS OF FORTY-EIGHT

Although the causes of the French Revolution were in the main material and economic, and the influence of the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau and others upon the mass of the people have been exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the views of Morelly, Mably, L'Ange, Chaumette and, later, Babœuf had an important effect in producing the sections of Communists, peaceful and forcible, who afterwards were prominent in French social risings and conspiracies. These authors and agitators do genuinely come under the head of Utopian Socialists. That is to say, their deification of man as a degenerated product from what the eighteenth-century deity, Nature, had made him in the beginning, and their elaboration of a human society, developed not from historic growth, but from their ethical conceptions of what man ought to be, are, in their essence, ideals, and, as applied to the conditions of their day, ideals alone. They believed that it was then possible, by appeals to human sentiment and human reason, to arrive at a series of communal arrangements which would supply the world with its material needs, and thus remove all the chief stimuli to crime. Private property would, in this way, be replaced by collective and communal property; rapacious individuals and predatory classes would alike disappear. Convinced of the natural goodness of human nature, they wished to remove all the artificial surroundings which had diverted it from the true relationships that should subsist among mankind.

The first and, on the whole, the most influential of these pleasing theorists was Morelly. His principal work was first published in 1755, or thirteen years before Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. It was entitled *Code de la Nature ou le Veritable esprit de Ses Lois—de tout temps négligé ou méconnu*. But twelve years before, in his *Essai sur l'Esprit Humain*, and two years afterwards, in 1745, in his *Essai sur le Cœur Humain*, he had

analysed human passions and human intelligence, and set forth a new plan of education. In his earliest book he gives two motives of the intelligence: "the desire for knowledge and the love of order." His *Code de la Nature* was also preceded by the *Basiliade*, a purely fanciful work, which he claimed to have translated from the Hindu of the famous Indian fabulist, Pilpay; probably, as one of his admirers and critics says, in order to avoid the ridicule which might otherwise have been evoked by his very advanced opinions. The *Code de la Nature* is the more formal expression of the semi-poetical ideas contained in the *Basiliade*. To give anything but an outline of Morelly's opinions would be out of place; but it is certainly not fair to think of him as a mere imitator of Plato or Sir Thomas More. His sketches of what might be done in the way of economic reorganisation and education, physical, moral and intellectual, anticipated Owen, probably influenced St Simon, and unquestionably acted as guides to Fourier, in his proposals for the establishment of communal phalansteries. Were it possible to pull up human society by the roots and transplant it into communal cities, Morelly's plans were perhaps as good as any that could be laid down. Moreover, it is interesting to note that his supernal admiration for Nature, in her creation and adaptation of man, did not blind him to the defects of her handiwork, when modified by the embruting institution of private property, which Morelly frankly denounced as the root of all evil. And he was a harsh judge.

Those who were not prepared to work under Morelly's communal associations were to undergo punishments of the old familiar kind, until they could appreciate the infinite advantages of brotherly co-operation in the provision for and enjoyment of life. Thus we have it under his own hand that "anyone who attempted to abrogate *the sacred laws* in order to introduce detestable private property, after having been tried and condemned by the supreme senate, shall be incarcerated for life in a dungeon constructed in the public cemetery, as a raving madman and an enemy of society. The name of the culprit will be for ever effaced from the roll of citizens." His children will be brought up in other communities, without, however, suffering in any way for the sins of their parent. Adultery, idleness and other trivial offences are punished in various ways. In fact,

Morelly's designs for enforcing the fraternity of Communism upon the recalcitrant were a sort of mild admixture of Incadom and Bolshevism. But these mistaken suggestions for his new world, like his cut-and-dried ideas of "cities" not exceeding one thousand, or at most two thousand, inhabitants, may be passed over as genial aberrations. Yet the objects he had in view as the essential conditions of success in his co-operative communities have since been considered applicable on a much wider scale, and in an immensely more advanced society, by many who label themselves scientific Socialists. The human mind, in this as in some other cases—notably in mathematics—seems to have been partially anticipatory of social forms still to be reached by inevitable human evolution. It is well to repeat that these provisions were first formulated in 1745 and given definite shape in 1755, one hundred and seventy-five years ago, forty-four years before the fall of the Bastille and the commencement of the French Revolution. His objects were:

1. To maintain the indivisible unity of the resources and of the common domain.

2. To establish the *common employment* of the instruments of labour and the productions of the community.

3. To distribute work according to capacity: products according to needs. ("From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," is the anarchist-communist formula of to-day, thus first put in words by Morelly.)

4. To retain around the "city" sufficient land to support the families who live in it.

5. To bring together a thousand persons at least, in order that, each working in proportion to his power and capacity, and consuming for the satisfaction of his needs and tastes, an average of consumption may be set on foot, for a sufficient number of individuals, which will not exceed the common resources, and an output from labour which always ensures a sufficient abundance.

6. To give talent no other privilege than that of directing works undertaken *in the common interest*, and to take no account in the distribution of intelligence, but solely of needs and wants. These exist before and survive after capacity itself has passed away.

7. To allow no pecuniary remuneration of any sort or kind.
   (*a*) Because capital is an instrument of labour which must remain wholly at the disposition and in the hands of the administration.
   (*b*) Because all money payment is *useless*, where labour freely exercised ensures a variety and an abundance of products greater than our needs; *harmful* in cases where disposition and taste did not suffice for all useful functions; *for this would provide individuals with a means for not paying their debt of labour and relieving themselves from their duties to society, without forfeiting the rights which society assures to them.*

Of the moral results which would accrue to all members of society were this system of general fraternal co-operation universally applied, Morelly naturally writes with vigour and enthusiasm. He rightly assumes that the provision of wealth for a society whose members all shared the common effort of production by the light labour of all would be perfectly easy even with the unscientific methods of agriculture—their most important industry—then prevailing. In 1802, nearly sixty years later, Owen made his famous declaration that "wealth might be made as plentiful as water" if all worked moderately; and he found no one disposed to refute him. But it is remarkable that Morelly, like his successor, Owen, considering the reorganisation of society from the ethical standpoint, and wishing to make human animals into highly intelligent and noble men, should accept the economic basis as the inevitable groundwork of his improved society—Utopian as that society certainly was in his setting forth.

It is not surprising, however, that humane and enthusiastic Frenchmen, such as Chaumette and others during the French Revolution, and Babœuf, Blanqui, Raspail and many afterwards, should be moved to attack the victorious bourgeoisie, who did their utmost to prevent Morelly's ideas from taking practical shape.

These ideas, neglected, except at first (when *Le Code de la Nature* was ascribed to Diderot), by the lettered class, had steadily crept in among the people; and it is no wonder that truly patriotic revolutionists, who saw how little the whole French working class had gained by the Revolution itself,

should have resorted to forcible conspiracies in order to secure the adoption of some portion at least of Morelly's proposals. Evolution in human affairs is a hard task-master, and demands patience all the time. Revolution by force seems a short cut to the realisation of the ideal which the most impatient, often the noblest, of reformers are eager to take. But reaction almost invariably follows, even upon success, if the time is not ripe for complete change in social relations. This teaching of history becomes monotonous in its reiteration.

The failure of Babœuf and his successors, who tried first to stem the tide of reaction which set in after the great awakening of 1793, was, however, in nowise due to the work of Morelly fifty years before, much as Babœuf himself was affected by the philosophic dreamer of dreams. It arose from the rapid increase in the wealth and strength of the bourgeoisie, who were forming a plutocracy, allied to the lawyers and the bureaucracy. This power grew steadily up from riches accumulated by lucrative contracts during the continuous war against invaders, from the purchase at derisory prices of lands confiscated from the nobility and the Church, and from the manipulation of assignats and paper money. Although, in 1794, the Committee of Public Safety ordered that public lands should be quickly disposed of in small lots, their regulations were still set at naught as before, and the rich were thus enabled to become richer by continuing to buy extensive tracts at low prices.

Such practices produced wide discontent among the people both in country and in town, and afforded, as it appeared, a fruitful field for vigorous communal agitation. In fact, many of the townsfolk accepted communal ideas when they found that the Revolution had relieved them of aristocratic rule only to give them other masters. From this time forward there grew in the minds of the inhabitants of the great cities the hope of another social revolution, which should sweep aside the triumphant bourgeoisie and constitute a communist society. But there was, as yet, no real proletariat, with recognised class interests, and definite organisation for class action. What could be done at that time on Socialist lines against a body of unscrupulous ex-revolutionists, who had piled up vast wealth for themselves, who controlled the Directory, who were supported by powerful financial interests of every kind and had virtual

control of the army and its chiefs ? The fate of the unfortunate Babœuf, who, with his associates, strove to make head against this growing domination of the new bourgeoisie, in favour of the democratic elements of the revolution and the starving people —for times were still desperately bad—did not encourage others to follow in his wake. He suffered death by the guillotine, not because of any political crime that he had committed, but because he acted on the principles of that very Revolution which these wealthy reactionary parvenus had championed and then basely abandoned.

The seed which Morelly had sown, and Chaumette, Le Roux, L'Ange and others watered, brought forth, unfortunately, only self-sacrifice and death for those who allowed the fruits of his conceptions to allure them. Jaurès puts the position very clearly. Not the most far-sighted of them all championed the substitution of common property for the oligarchical property of the great manufacturers or the distributed property of the master craftsmen. "The more Utopian communists of the eighteenth century thought only of an agrarian communism" —this is generally true, though it is certainly not so manifest in the case of Morelly—"and their industry appeared to them as the field for personal initiative and individual property. The master craftsmen likewise adhered passionately to their relative autonomy and to their property, no matter how illusory it might be. It needed nearly a century and the growth of the great mechanical factories, to teach the master craftsmen of Lyons, of Roanne, of Saint Etienne that the social evolution inevitably condemned them to become proletarians: barely even to-day do they begin to conceive of the communal system. How could they have done so more than a hundred years ago ?" The most that could have been achieved, Jaurès continues, was a demand for protective legislation limiting the day's work, fixing a minimum wage with liberty of combination. What does all this mean save that, however desirous men of genius may be to build up a Kingdom of Heaven upon earth for mankind, it is wholly impossible to create one either by force, or by reason, until such time as the inevitable course of evolution has placed the means of bringing this about at the disposal of humanity. Meanwhile the many are crushed under the fortunes of the few, and a new slavery replaces the old.

Morelly was a philosopher and a man of letters. L'Ange, the Utopian Socialist and communal propagandist of Lyons, was an artisan. He, too, half-a-century after Morelly, was even more of a Utopian Socialist than the theorist of the library. He saw clearly enough that the workers produce all the wealth and are deprived of the whole of what they create, save just enough to keep body and soul together, by the idlers who dub themselves owners. But manual toiler of the great silk manufacturing centre of Lyons as he was, he could go no further than the land problem. There is no conception of the organisation of the victims of a class war as one great army against the exploiters of labour. Moreover, he appeals to the King, and looks for some heaven-sent deliverer to come forward and liberate the people from their oppressors. But nothing can be more outspoken than this: "The truth which enlightens us tears asunder the absurd veil of property, with which our enemies drape themselves in the insolent pride of sloth. The gold on which they plumed themselves is only useful and wholesome when in the hands of us labourers; it becomes pestiferous when accumulated in the safes of capitalists, who are to the body politic what ulcers are to our physical frames . . . the land is settled only by us: we are they who work, we are the first owners, the first and last useful occupiers. The idlers who call themselves owners can but grab the surplus over and above our actual subsistence; that proves at least our co-ownership. But if, naturally, we are co-owners and the sole cause of all returns, the right to reduce our subsistence and to deprive us of the surplus is the right of a brigand." L'Ange therefore demands from the King the surrender of his Civil List and the expropriation of all landed property. Later, when democracy had made way and L'Ange himself had been elected to the municipality of Lyons, he no longer appealed to the King, but set to work to elaborate schemes for production, instead of complete expropriation, which anticipated the designs of Fourier. Whether L'Ange had ever studied the works of Morelly does not appear, but probably the ideas promulgated by that Socialist were known in Lyons as general projects of social reconstruction.

I have thus dealt with these two, even now comparatively unknown, authors because in their works we find the origins not only of the communistic designs of direct action under arms,

as set forth by Chaumette and Babœuf, but also the outlines of the programmes of Fourier, Cabet, Victor Considérant, and even of the founders of Brook Farm. Here, too, we have the anarchistic communism summarised by Proudhon in his famous *La Propriété c'est le Vol*, a repetition in more striking form of L'Ange's claim that the ownership of the non-producers and the idle is "brigandage"; and here is even the outline of Kropotkin's eloquent *Appeal to the Young*. It is all, in fact, an echo of the cry of the oppressed toilers ringing down through the centuries, and yet another proof of the futility, as a matter of practice, of endeavouring to attain results which the conditions of the time decree to be unrealisable.

In France more than in any other country the desire to anticipate events, to proceed from the ideal to the real, from theory to practice, is a permanent influence with the people; and in Paris, of all cities, the dreams of a higher humanity urge on men and women to deeds of hopeless heroism. But the French Revolution, by planting the peasantry firmly on the soil, furnished a vast body of individualist conservatism to outweigh the fine humanitarian collectivism of the towns; while still keeping the peasants themselves ill-requited toilers at the most arduous of all occupations—the cultivation of small plots of land.

## CHAPTER XXIV

## FORTY-EIGHT AND SEVENTY-ONE

The Great Powers of Europe, not content with overthrowing the aggressive Imperialism of Napoleon, made the stupendous blunder of imposing upon the fallen empire the old monarchy of reaction and incompetence. Louis XVIII. and his exiled nobility had learnt nothing and had forgotten nothing. If they could have restored the *ancien régime* and resuscitated the dry bones of feudalism, they would. This was impossible. But all that they were able to accomplish in this direction they did, besides avenging themselves on their enemies, and compensating their friends for their overthrow. Yet the Bourbon monarchs of the Restoration, with all their eagerness to return to the old period, as if the Revolution had never taken place, found it out of their power either to restrain the growing influence of the bourgeoisie, or to put back the peasantry or the artisans into their position of subservience. Nevertheless the clergy and the aristocracy had more control than was advantageous either for the people, the Crown, or, in the long run, for themselves. And as time went on discontent grew. The economic and social results of the Revolution remained far behind the ideals for which the mass of Frenchmen had fought and fallen at home and abroad. The impulse given towards the attainment of higher and nobler conditions remained: their realisation seemed indefinitely postponed.

This was much more felt under Charles X. than under his predecessor. The King's belief in his right divine was profound; and, as a reasonable return to the Deity from whom he derived his royal prerogative to rule over his subjects, he did his utmost to make them as devout Catholics as himself. The priesthood regained much of their old influence; freedom of speech and the Press was restricted as far as possible; only those ministers were favoured who were given over to anti-democratic policies. This could not go on. The memories of

the great Revolution and the good which it had done were still fresh in men's minds; the recollections of its horrors had partly been obliterated by the glories of Napoleon's victories, partly dimmed by efflux of time. Whether or not the hour had come for another great effort towards freedom, all could agree that the day had gone by for an irresponsible monarchy, dominated by unscrupulous priestcraft and intriguing aristocracy. Paris once more took the lead in overthrowing a kingship which had all the drawbacks of intolerable usurpation, wedded to worn-out traditions of the sanctity of hereditary rule. Three days of tremendous street fighting in the metropolis were sufficient, in July, 1830, to put an end to the resuscitated Bourbon dynasty. Charles X. and all his descendants found themselves chased into exile, from which they can never hope to return.

This sudden and complete defeat of unconstitutional and semi-despotic monarchy was not surprising. For, since 1815, the spirit of republicanism, democracy, Socialism and even anarchy had been growing beneath the surface in all the great towns. What was still more fatal to the form of kingship admired and upheld by the last of the Bourbon kings of France, was the fact that he had failed to propitiate the bourgeoisie, who now required not only the substance, but the appearance, of power. Had Charles recognised this, and acted in accordance with the wishes of that section of the country which was now, in effect, the most powerful political and economic factor, he might have held his own during his life against the real forces of progress, just as Louis Philippe and Napoleon III. afterwards did for a time. As it was, he united parties against him which dexterous statesmanship might have separated; and the very honesty of his bigotry only rendered his downfall more complete. That, in any case, France was not ripe for the reconstitution of the Republic, used and then discarded by Napoleon, was clear from what followed upon "the glorious days of July" which sent Charles headlong from his throne. Had the Republicans possessed a strong hold upon Paris, the great industrial towns and the country, the road to power was open before them, even more clearly than it was eighteen years later. Louis Philippe, with all his considerable faculties and by no means undistinguished career as a friend of the Revolution, a soldier of the Republic, an exile, and a man of thought and

intelligence, had no great wave of popular enthusiasm behind him such as, twenty-three years afterwards, enabled Napoleon III. to sweep into control of France as President. Yet he became king in place of his relative, with little difficulty and no bloodshed. His family had been for two or three generations the favoured royalists of the bourgeoisie, and his father, whatever his shortcomings in other respects prior to his decapitation, had, at least, been true to his friends and fellow-conspirators of that class, against the adherents of the *ancien régime*. Louis Philippe inherited the family tradition, and he ascended the throne as, above all, the bourgeois king. From 1830 onwards he played that rôle, and that alone.

He was a man of peace, and he maintained peace. He overcame the risings of 1834 without incurring any bitter animosity, and he slipped out of foreign difficulties which might easily have involved his country in war. There was nothing to be said against his personal character. His relations with his wife and family were beyond reproach. The class which he specially favoured made money steadily throughout his reign, and he looked on with satisfaction at their accumulation of wealth. Corruption was not uncommon, and this was the charge principally levelled at himself and his ministers towards the close of his reign. But Louis Philippe was, it appears, personally incorruptible. He himself also did nothing seriously harmful to the mass of people and was universally admitted to have ability. It is no easy matter, even to-day, with all the documents of the time before us, to say precisely why he lost heart at a comparatively trifling crisis, and ran away in disguise. But the truth seemed to be, not that the real revolutionists, who came immediately to the front from below, were ready to act and did act, but that he had somehow "bored" the Parisian bourgeoisie and disgusted the artisans, had failed to rally the peasantry to his standard, and had been unable to impress the nation as a whole with the sense that he was dignified himself and cared for its dignity. He roused no hatred, but he stirred no enthusiasm. He had no enemies, but he could rely upon no friends. He had shown ability before he came to the throne, but he displayed only judicious mediocrity when he attained it. To no man of modern times could the famous epigram of Tacitus be applied with more manifest truth than to Louis Philippe:

*Omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset.* It is true that accidents do not make political revolutions, but they give the opportunity for them when all is ready for a change. And that is how the revolution in France in 1848 came about. A chance firing upon a crowd by a company of misguided soldiers, and King Louis Philippe went skulking out of France as "Mr Smith."

Then began the first serious effort to achieve the conquest of social and economic liberty for the people, since the decline of the revolution of 1789 to 1794. For thirty-three years, from 1815 to 1848, revolutionary France had become conservative France—for twenty years longer, if we reckon from the triumph of the reactionary forces in 1794-1795. The great impulse towards general freedom in its true sense had come too soon for more than very partial realisation; the bourgeoisie, which won its own special struggle, was indifferent to all else; the peasantry, no longer chained to the land by personal ties, but by pecuniary bonds to the market, had become conservative through sheer individualism; the Parisian wage-earners and intellectuals were, as ever, far in advance of the country as a whole; the Socialists, with all their high ideals and splendid enthusiasm, had not yet formed a definite party, even in Paris, Lyons and the industrial centres of the north, and were regarded with distrust and hatred not only by the population of the rural districts, but by the majority of the high and low bourgeoisie.

Yet the latter, with the more progressive of the middle class, formed the combination which pushed the King from his throne, rushed to the barricades, then so easily run up in the narrow streets of the metropolis, with arms in their hands, against an enemy that for the moment lay low, and clamoured for social measures on behalf of the population. There were plenty of differences even then among the men of the extreme left, but in the early days, though moving from various centres, they acted towards a common end. Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, Albert and Arago were combined in the attack with the great Blanqui, Barbès, Cabet and even the anarchist Proudhon. So little, however, did the leaders at the top know of the forces which they were supposed to command that, when it came to the formation of a Provisional Government, none of its members so much as knew Albert, the engineer, who was the hero of all working-class Paris. Yet his fellow-workmen insisted that

Albert should at once be accepted as a member of the Government, so completely had he their confidence. Accepted he was. This the Parisians followed up by electing him at the head of the poll for the metropolis to the National Assembly.

Mistakes were soon made. The Provisional Government itself was a coalition of compromise, and had all the weaknesses inherent in such political combinations. Men like Garnier-Pagès, Marie, Flocon, Lamartine, could not long continue to work in accord with the Socialists and Radicals, especially when they could not even agree upon the reforms, administrative and social, which should be adopted before the National Assembly was elected, and laid before that body as definite measures for confirmation, rejection or modification. The plan actually adopted of having no clear Government policy really played into the hands of fanatical insurrectionists, such as Blanqui and Barbès on the one hand, and the Royalists and reactionists, who stood behind the moderates, on the other. There was no effective official administration to meet the clamours of the populace, who, with a heavy financial deficit bequeathed to them from M. Guizot's administration above, were menaced with famine below.

What the Socialists of reorganisation, represented by the trio, Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin and Albert, might have effected, had they been allowed a free hand, it is impossible to say. Louis Blanc's proposals, as formulated in his own works, were based upon schemes of Socialist co-operation for all. He adopted in its fullest meaning Morelly's phrase, so generally attributed to the communist anarchists, but most certainly not originated by them: "From each according to his abilities: to each according to his needs." His practical schemes of working-class co-operation in different departments were successful until upset by the reactionary bourgeoisie; but it is doubtful whether, even if they had been left alone, they could have been permanent. That the organisers and the employees, who were all workers together, should have achieved what they did, with scarcely any capital to start upon, was most creditable. Also it is clear that Louis Blanc desired to apply his measures on a very much larger scale, since he demanded, when the Republic had been constituted by the Provisional Government, that a complete Department of Labour should be established, with a responsible minister

at its head. This was a statesmanlike project, which might have led to great improvements in the organisation and conditions of existence of the mass of the workers in the cities. But reaction was now gaining ground, and the National Assembly had become little better than an obstacular combination of the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on. So obvious was this that it afforded some ground—though from a tactical point of view little excuse—for the attack made upon it by the physical force Socialists and their followers, organised by Blanqui, whose natural hatred of the bourgeoisie, and furious desire to destroy the entire profiteering system, often misled his judgment and obscured his remarkable intelligence. The attack failed, and grossly unfair efforts were made to connect Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin and their faction with the assault. This misrepresentation, as well as the attempt itself, told against Socialists of all shades of opinion, although they had nothing to do with Blanqui's scheme. In fact the cry of "property in danger" was thenceforth raised in earnest, and Proudhon's anarchist pronouncements were quoted far and wide as evidence of what all degrees of peaceful, hard-working, respectable citizens, from bankers and capitalists down to professional men and small shopkeepers, must expect if the Socialists and their proletariat had their way. Thus, even before the Republic had gained a firm hold on the situation, the path to supreme power was being prepared for an anti-Socialist dictator; and the feeling of the provinces towards Paris, never too friendly, was greatly embittered. It is this antagonism between the conservative peasantry of the rural districts and the brilliant idealism of *la ville lumière* that has so often proved a serious source of trouble to France throughout the nineteenth century.

But, in addition to all this, one of the most extraordinary series of misrepresentations ever recorded in history was devised, carried out, and triumphantly brought to a conclusion, by the politicians of the dominant bourgeoisie, in order to discredit and permanently damage the reputation of their Socialist opponents. All the world knew that the constructive Socialists of 1848 wished to organise the labour of the wage-earners on co-operative principles, with the help of capital advanced by the State, so that production and distribution might be established in the interest of the whole community, but primarily for the benefit of the workers themselves, and under their control, without

profit to the capitalist class. It was the same idea that found expression at the same date in Great Britain, through the plans of Robert Owen and some of the Chartists. The Louis Blanc party never concealed their hopes of being able to bring this about, with the aid of their friends of the so-called Luxembourg group. It was to this end that a Ministry of Labour was proposed; and it was because the adherents of the bourgeoisie feared that such a department would lead to the success of the scheme on a large scale that they defeated the suggestion in the National Assembly. They thought that it might bring to naught all their favourite machinery of private property in the means and tools of production and all the paraphernalia of profiteering based upon wage slavery. This was their reason for nipping the scheme of State co-operation in the bud.

Whether the project could have been successful, even if worked to its fullest extent, with perfect good faith and with ample capital, at that particular juncture, may be doubted. Probably not. But it is quite indisputable that not a single member of the Socialist party had the crude conception of massing together a great body of workpeople, anxious to obtain employment, who were of quite different capacities and dissimilar trades, in one establishment, under one head, paying them all an inadequate wage to start with, and then paying those who applied for work, but could not be employed, half that wage, whether they were doing useful service or not. During the eighteen years of Louis Philippe's reign nothing had been done to benefit the poor workers or to organise the unemployed, but numerous plans had been put forward, outside the Government, to deal with an increasingly difficult problem. Nothing, however, so wholly idiotic as this. The Socialists had no capital wherewith to start such an absurd project, and no State organisation at their disposal wherewith to put it in motion. That it was doomed to failure was obvious from the very first.

Yet, from that time to this, Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, Albert, and the Socialists generally, have been held responsible by the capitalist Press in every country for these National Workshops of the French Republic, with which they had nothing whatever to do, directly or indirectly, in any shape or way. Even to-day, when the whole of the lying statements have been exposed, and the truth has been told time after time, the National Workshops

are still brought up to prove the folly of any attempt at collective management in the interest of the people.

This seems incredible; but the facts have been placed quite beyond dispute, not only by Louis Blanc and his coadjutors, but by the Minister who authorised the enterprise, by the Manager of the National Workshops himself, and by contemporaneous records of what was done. The Minister who undertook the elaboration of the whole scheme was M. Marie. M. Marie was not only not a Socialist, but was one of the most vehement anti-Socialists of his time, as he never hesitated to declare. The head of the whole establishment was M. Henri Thomas, likewise a strong anti-Socialist, who wrote a book still extant recording the progress of the works. All this must be known to most of the anti-Socialist writers who have used these Industrial Workshops, set on foot and maintained by men of the same opinions as themselves, for the purpose of decrying all Socialist effort; yet the misrepresentation goes on.

But the downfall of this foolish or deliberately sinister plan—for many were of the opinion that so fatuous a scheme was set on foot with the express object of preventing any reasonable effort in the same direction—played a great part in the events which followed. The waste of public money was comparatively small, but it was enough to serve as an argument among the small traders, and to strengthen the propaganda, shortly thereafter organised throughout the provinces among the peasantry, in favour of a strong and stable government. This new government would legitimately secure remunerative work for all, would put an end to all attacks upon private property, would protect the savings alike of the rich and the poor, would secure the expansion of trade and the growth of profits that went on under the late king, without the corruption that permeated all departments of the State, would give France again her rightful leadership in Europe—would, in short, be the rule, not of the powerless and discredited Republic, but of a genuine Republic, under the Presidency of Louis Napoleon Buonaparte, who had been allowed to return to France as a private citizen. How Louis Napoleon and his clique of unscrupulous adventurers succeeded, first in dominating the Republic through his Presidency, acclaimed by the French people, and then in establishing himself as Emperor by an overwhelming *plébiscite* in his favour,

need not be dealt with. The powerful bourgeoisie welcomed Napoleon III. for fear of Socialism, as their forbears had welcomed Napoleon I. to shut down the Revolution. It was reaction again in its worst form. But it was reaction based upon the will of the people, and the bourgeois Empire lasted as long as Louis Philippe's bourgeois Kingdom. Even just before its overthrow by the German invaders in 1870, another *plébiscite* had declared that the great majority of Frenchmen preferred Napoleon III., in spite of all his blunders, to the establishment of a third Republic. France, which is rural France, was not ready to accept the leadership of Paris, then bitterly opposed to Napoleon, his wife and all their coterie. It needed the terrible defeats and devastations of 1870 to shake down the Empire.

When, in 1870, the news of the disasters on the front reached Paris there was no thought of reorganising the Empire under a Regency. The cry for abdication immediately arose. The Empress was glad to get safely out of the metropolis and take refuge in England. A Republic was at once established and a moderate or even conservative government formed. During the last years of the Empire Socialism had gained much ground in Paris; and its adherents, who had never bowed to the Imperialist despotism, which the more active spirits had conspired to overthrow, took their part in the new administration.

So long before as 1847 the famous Communist Manifesto, by Marx and Engels, had been published. No pamphlet in modern times has ever had so wide and so continuous an influence. Even now, seventy-two years after the first appearance of the Manifesto, it is continually quoted by Social Democrats and Labour men, its historical survey is generally admitted to be sound, and its prognostications are being verified all round the world. Its authors boldly declare that in every country where the capitalist system of production prevails, the last class war, that between the wage slaves and the bourgeoisie — who with their parasites now own and control all the means for making and distributing wealth — is the one great subject for the workers to consider. They are economically and socially the hereditary successors of the chattel slaves and the serfs. Now will come their turn. They must combine to conquer, not only nationally but internationally. With them, as time goes on, the whole of the rest

of the disinherited class, such as the small shopkeepers and intellectual proletariat, will be forced to make common cause to overthrow the wages system and constitute a Communist Republic. For this great struggle the workers of all nations must band themselves together.

It is clear, from the concluding exhortation to the workers to use the collective power they would then attain, that the authors still believed, when the Communist Manifesto was penned, that "force could act as the midwife of the old society pregnant with the new," and that a capable, thoroughly educated and enthusiastic minority might, in some degree, anticipate events to the advantage of all by forcible action in each of the great industrial centres of their respective countries. This concession to the natural impatience of toiling humanity, when once we understand how its members are enslaved by capitalism and the wages system, runs counter to the authors' own theories.

But in 1847 all Europe was astir with fresh ideas, national and social, and the possibility of a new, wider and more successful French Revolution was in every mind. The Chartists vigorously preached their national views of the class antagonism in Great Britain; and more than one of their leaders gave those practical views of the growth and historical bearing of economic relations upon the existing capitalist system, which were more elaborately and scientifically set forth in the Manifesto. But the conception of a concerted international movement, and revolution under arms against capital, first made its public appeal to the peoples of Europe in that Manifesto. In 1848, however, it had little direct influence even on Continental risings. In 1870 the situation was very different. The International had been formed in 1864 in London, and had held its first Congress in Geneva in 1868. There were acute differences between the various sections of Socialists then, as ever since; but Marxian theories had already had considerable effect, and were accepted as a whole by many Socialists, who were by no means inclined to concur in the personal attitude which Marx and Engels too often adopted. Nevertheless the International made a great impression on the world, much greater than its strength warranted at this date (1868-1870). The capitalist class instinctively felt that its right to domination, or even to existence, was definitely challenged all

over the civilised world, and its fears for the future were translated into apprehension for the present.

When, however, the French Empire fell, and a Republic was proclaimed, there was nothing whatever to give an indication that Socialists would choose perhaps the most unpromising opportunity that could have been offered to attempt a serious movement in Paris, on behalf of the proletariat, national and international. Nor did they choose it. The people of Paris, who had undergone all the terrible trials of starvation during the siege by the German army, were first provoked into resistance by the wholly unjustifiable attempt of the reactionary element in the Provisional Government of the metropolis to disarm their citizen forces. The same Government, then, regardless of the fact that the victorious German army—certainly no friend to Communism—still kept watch and ward round their city, drifted into a policy which put the Commune in Paris at variance with the rest of France. The leaders of the extreme party then forced the pace, without knowing the road they had to travel.

Their quarrels prevented them from achieving even a limited success against the troops which M. Thiers gathered to assail them at Versailles. Had they attacked these troops, before they were consolidated under efficient generalship, and won, the citizens of Paris might have negotiated on reasonable terms with their countrymen, who proved themselves later to be their most ruthless enemies. But noble as were the ideals of the chiefs of the Commune, they entirely misjudged the situation without, and as completely overrated their strength within. Not only so, but they overlooked the crucial fact of their position. They forgot that the Commune of Paris played a decisive part in the great effort against feudalism at the crisis of the Revolution, in 1792, and before reaction set in, precisely because Paris then, as to some extent again in 1848, had the sympathy and support of the other large cities of France, and, still more important, of the peasantry and the rural districts generally. But, in the case of the Commune of 1871, there was no such even incipient solidarity. Early in the conflict an arrangement for common action was rendered virtually impossible. Paris had to suffice for herself. Many who sympathised with the aspirations of the Communists saw from the beginning that this made

the situation hopeless. That is why there were such strenuous endeavours to bring about terms of accommodation to the deplorable civil war between the brain and the body of France. But, owing to the intransigent attitude taken up on both sides, all such well-meant intervention was vain. During the days that passed from March to May the conflict became more and more a fight to the death between the national and international proletariat and people, as represented by the Parisians with their municipal troops, and the bourgeoisie, championed by M. Thiers and his army outside the walls. Unfortunately for them, the Communists could neither develop a military genius whom all would trust—Cluseret, the ablest who appeared, was constantly hampered by internal jealousies—nor a capable diplomatist who might conceivably have brought about peace. So, for two months, the world looked on at a battle, the result of which was inevitable if continued to the bitter end.

The Socialist party throughout the world, as well as many wage-earners who were not Socialists, were hoping against hope that some miracle might save their fanatical comrades from destruction. The capitalist class and their Press of that day rejoiced to see the Communists thus driven into a corner, with the Germans ready to crush them, if, by any such miracle, they gained a temporary advantage. Whatever mistakes they may have made, and, unluckily for the cause, they made many, none could dispute the honesty or high idealism of the majority of the leaders, or of the rank and file who fought at the Barricades. They were striving for the emancipation of the working people from the sordid organisation of production for profit, and the substitution of a nobler system for the whole civilised world. Those of the Communists who differed most as to methods were agreed as to the end they wished to attain. Therefore, from that day to this, the men and women who fell, during the fighting, and after the victory of the bourgeoisie, have been regarded as martyrs for the great cause of human freedom, economic and social. The horrible butcheries on the plains of Satory and elsewhere, with which the bourgeoisie celebrated their triumph, strengthened this feeling. Such wholesale slaughter was intended, not merely to avenge the rising upon the insurrectionists, but, like Napoleon III.'s cold-blooded shooting down of the crowds upon the boulevards, to terrorise the revolutionary

people of Paris for at least a generation. So ruthless were these immolations of men and women against whom often no offence was proved, that a change of feeling was manifest even in the capitalist Press. Beside these massacres, such deplorable events as the killing of General Thomas and the sacrifice of the Archbishop of Paris and other hostages, for which the Communist leaders were not responsible, faded into mere incidents. But they were incidents which, in conjunction with the incendiary fires, were long used to inflame public opinion against all who held and expressed Socialist views.

What made the whole rising the more regrettable was the strength and weakness displayed by the Communists when they had Paris entirely in their hands. Their strength was shown in the complete absence of corruption, in the perfect freedom for all which was maintained during their administration, in the almost excessive parsimony of the heads of departments in their own personal expenditure, and in the quite admirable management, not only of all the municipal work of Paris, but of other civil matters which fell within their scope. According to the testimony of conservative foreigners of means and education who knew the French capital well, never was Paris so clean, so orderly, so excellently ruled in every respect as during the short period of the Commune. The elected of the workers showed in this respect the highest sense of responsibility. Their weakness they displayed in still adhering, when in power, to some of the narrowest prejudices of the bourgeoisie against whom they were in revolt. They went so far as to confuse respect for private property with veneration for the sanctity of public and absolutely necessary funds. Thus when £60,000,000 in gold and an enormous store of silver were lying in the Bank of France they actually borrowed a trifle of £40,000 from the Rothschilds. What might have been effected in the way of bribing their enemies with these vast accumulations, especially at the outset, they failed to consider.

But the greatest mistake was to drift into the conflict at all. A desperate struggle of this kind is precisely what should be avoided by the oppressed class, until at least a fair prospect of success lies immediately ahead, and a complete policy has been formulated. The emancipation of the workers of the world cannot be brought about by half-trained levies, with no adequate

commanders, and civil administrators who see no farther than the passing problems of the day. High ideals call for the highest ability and foresight, with a cool judgment of the situation, to secure their realisation. Defeat on such an issue ought not to be lightly risked. When incurred, it brings with it long and serious discouragement. For leaders to imagine that capitalism can be overthrown, before its time and under impossible circumstances, by glorious self-sacrifice and magnificent but unorganised heroism, is a species of martyrdom which involves temporary ruin to the cause. Leaders who act on these principles, therefore, are, with perfect honesty and the best of intentions, untrue to their trusteeship for humanity. For leaders there will ever be; and the loss or exile of the best of them means a setback to the principles they strive for. Not only did the failures of the Commune of Paris throw back the whole movement of education and political action for at least twenty years, but, fifty years after, the calumnies and misrepresentations, which have been unjustly but plausibly heaped upon its champions, tell against the apostles of Socialism to-day.

The truth, on the other side, is that, sad as the campaign of the Communists may have been from the point of view of the workers, injurious as its inevitable failure was to the general movement, and fatal for the time being to the International, which was credited with responsibility for the attempt, the real criminals were the statesmen and generals of the bourgeoisie. By their illegal attempt to disarm the defenders of Paris they put themselves wholly in the wrong to begin with. By their revolting cruelty and shameful injustice they covered themselves with infamy at the end.

## CHAPTER XXV

## THE RISE OF ENGLISH CAPITALISM

When Great Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century is described as being still an agricultural country, possessed of no " great industry " in the modern sense, the significance of this statement is not always fully comprehended. But in order to understand the development which followed, it is essential to grasp what the England of the early part of that century really was. The total population of England and Wales certainly did not exceed 6,500,000 people, all told, in 1750. More than three-quarters of these people lived in the agricultural districts or in small country towns which were dependent upon agriculture. Of the remaining 1,400,000 or 1,500,000 some 700,000 are computed to have been resident in London, but all the statistics of that period are very imperfect. Though manufacture was developing and commerce was relatively large, there was nothing to show that the nation was on the eve of the greatest industrial revolution the world has ever seen. The people were, as a whole, rather better off than they had been in the century before. The new growth of the towns brought about a larger demand for corn, etc., and rendered arable land more profitable than pasture in many localities. Thus more agricultural labourers were required, and unemployment was reduced. Much of the manufacture, such as the spinning and weaving of wool, was carried on in the villages throughout the country. Agriculture and manufacture were not as yet divorced from one another. Some of the artisans and their families still cultivated their own plots of land. Farmers and agricultural labourers were comparatively prosperous. Great Britain was even a corn-exporting country, as she had been in the days of the Roman occupation. Higher wages obtained than had been paid, relatively to the price of food, since the palmy days of the fifteenth century, the common land was still not wholly seized from the people, and general conditions were better than in the previous century.

Great, therefore, as were the drawbacks to the whole system of parish settlement which then prevailed, confining workers to the district in which they were born, if they wished to secure some provision for themselves and their children in sickness or old age; preposterous as seem to us the arrangements whereby the lords of the soil and their adherents were masters of all they surveyed; iniquitous as we necessarily deem the political disfranchisement of those whose labour supplied the privileged classes with their luxuries, and the violence and corruption by which these same privileged classes asserted and maintained their supremacy; nevertheless, when every possible allowance is made, it may be confidently asserted that there was far less misery and physical deterioration at the middle of the eighteenth century, in proportion to the population and general wealth, than there is to-day.

Thus, the England of the first half of the eighteenth century was still an England of agriculturists and handicraftsmen, as it had been for many generations. Tillage had greatly improved, and much land had been reclaimed from marsh and forest. Mining had increased, and in some directions production for profit, unhampered by the more stringent Middle Age restrictions, had grown up. Production on the land, notwithstanding the change in the social relations and the conversion of dues and services into money payment, was not materially different from what it had been ages before in our own and other countries. In one respect, however, the cultivators and craftsmen were worse off than their predecessors of the times of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylonia or under the Antonines in Rome. Nay, even in the period of the monasteries they were not at such a great disadvantage. Of the Babylonian roads we have no full records, but we do know that the posts of the Babylonian monarchs were delivered with a regularity and rapidity which must put their means of communication on a level with their admirable irrigation works. Of the Roman roads we can judge, not only by the rapid journeys made and the great marches accomplished by their armies, but by the remains of the fine causeways constructed by the legionaries in our own island. By these great roads their Empire was held together. The same with the Peruvians, who could by no possibility have maintained their control over their subjugated peoples, covering such a vast

stretch of country, had it not been for their roads and bridges, with barracks and blockhouses erected along the highway.

There was nothing of all this in the Great Britain of the Georges. After the destruction of the monasteries, whose abbots, priors and monks kept up reasonable means of communication between their properties, for their own personal advantage, the roads in this island became almost impassable, except in summer-time, over a large part of the country. The main highroads were hardly better than the subsidiary tracks. Transport was necessarily limited. Throughout the south of England the roads were as bad as "the infernal road," described by Arthur Young as serving what were, even in his day (1770), the most populous and prosperous districts of Lancashire. This difficulty of home transport inevitably made the comparatively sparse population more scattered than the mere distances between the towns and villages would convey to the mind. The very traditions of road-making had died out: and home trade was so hampered by the cost, and even danger, of conveyance by land that the possibility of improvement seemed very remote. The deliberate enactments of the Middle Ages, confining trade within strict limits, were far less harmful to internal traffic than the chaos in transport due to abominable roads.

Thus, in production and distribution, the country life of England a hundred and seventy years ago was to all appearance little in advance, economically, of the England of the fifteenth century, or of the Continental countries which, politically, were far behind her in social development. One great distinction, however, there was, which, in the long run, dominated the domestic situation. The people, though completely freed from the direct trammels of villeinage and serfdom, had already been to a very large extent uprooted from the soil. The majority of the cultivators no longer owned the land upon which they toiled: the capitalist farmers had interposed between them and the landowners (to whom these farmers now paid differential rents in money) and employed the expropriated peasants as free wage-earners. The artisan class in the towns and cities was in much the same position. They were, as said above, in a better position than their fathers of the previous century, owing to the rise in the standard of life, based upon higher wages and lower prices for necessaries. But their personal freedom was nominal,

not real. A state of things had been created below the surface to which there was so far no parallel in history. The middle class had gained political power; and their strength had been extended and confirmed both by the Civil War against Charles I. and by the removal of James II. in favour of William III.

The influence of the bourgeoisie was, in fact, slowly becoming supreme. This meant that pecuniary relations were being substituted for personal relations all along the line. Feudal obligations had practically lapsed; guild and municipal ordinances had fallen into decay; a large body of landless wage-earners had grown up out of the breakdown of the arrangements of the old time; enclosures were steadily proceeding and increasing the landless majority; commerce had attained a great development; finance had become an increasingly important factor in business life. All the social conditions were, in short, ready for the installation of capital in its last and dominant form.

As shown, this point of readiness was never attained in any of the ancient economic and social developments. Production for profit had made its appearance at more than one epoch, but it had never rivalled commerce and usury as a means of accumulating riches out of the employment of money. Neither in the period of chattel slavery, nor in that of serfdom, could capital, embodied in gold or silver, enter the field of production at large, simply for the purpose of emerging as a larger mass of monetary capital in the hands of the same capitalist, to be used again and again for the like process in order to obtain more profit.

Capital, as the controlling force in economic and social life, demands not merely a large body of money wealth in private hands—that has been seen many times in human history without producing any such result—but it also calls for a large body of men, divorced from the soil, who, like their brethren in the towns and cities, have no independent resources outside their own power to labour: who are, too, by improvement in the processes of production, losing control over their own tools and means of production which pass into the possession of the capitalist class. Now England had reached this stage of economic and social development in the latter half of the eighteenth century more completely than any other country. Thus, provided there were markets available, the success of capitalists who turned out commodities for profit instead of articles for

use was certain. Production generally for exchange, thereupon, became the rule and no longer the exception. All the machinery for this transformation, in the shape of banks, credits, bills of exchange, large external trade, were ready, and had only to be expanded to meet the necessities of the situation.

But everything had proceeded gradually and unconsciously. Neither the English people themselves, their statesmen, politicians or leading economists had any idea that the time was near when the island of Great Britain would actually enter a period wherein capital, in its industrial profit-making shape, would completely subvert all the old forms of production, and act in a most revolutionary sense upon the whole of society. Adam Smith, whose great work appeared in 1776, when the influence of the large steam-motived machine industry was already having its effect, had not the remotest conception, either of the immediate or the ultimate result, of the vast change that was going on all round him. As his principal biographer puts it, the chief object of Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Sources of the Wealth of Nations*, largely based upon the previous works of the French economists, "is to demonstrate that the most effectual plan for advancing a people to greatness is to follow that order of things which nature"—it is amusing to find the English economist appealing to "nature" after the fashion of Rousseau—"has pointed out, by allowing every man, as long as he observes the rules of justice"—another eighteenth-century abstraction—"to pursue his own interest in his own way, and to bring both his interest and his capital into the freest competition with those of his fellow-citizens." It is creditable to Smith that, having in view this principal object of erecting the freest competition of capital and labour into a sort of economic deity, he should have been able enough to discern, and honest enough to proclaim, that farmers appeared to enter into a combination to keep down the rate of wages. But St Simon, who was born sixteen years before the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, and issued his first important book in 1819, just a generation afterwards, and Fourier, who was writing simultaneously, both saw much farther than this; while the champions of the English proletariat, Adam Smith's contemporaries, though unrecognised and even derided in their lifetime, were very far ahead of him in their appreciation of what was really going on. Nay, a

hundred years earlier, the great Quaker, John Bellers, had already pointed out, when production for exchange and profit under capital was only in its infancy, that complete liberty of capital, so far from always facilitating exchange, frequently hampered it, by the necessity imposed upon the capitalist producer of transforming his goods into gold before he could profitably continue his operations. Here the antagonism between gold and commodities, afterwards so admirably illustrated by Marx and others, is first noted in economics; and its consequences, under capitalism, in bringing about unemployment for willing labourers, owing to an artificial obstacle placed in the way of a continuous absorption of the articles of use created, are animadverted upon.

This, however, is a partial anticipation of reflections that will more naturally come later. The main points to be considered and emphasised are: First, that capital, in its shape of control over production as a whole, for the purpose of producing articles of social use, not directly for such use, but for exchange, to obtain a profit for the capitalist himself, is quite modern, a form of production which has grown up within the last few generations, and was unknown, except as an accidental and transitory phenomenon, in all the endless ages of anterior production. Secondly, no matter how great the accumulation of money capital might be, it could not be continuously employed for the extraction of profit from the processes of industry on a large scale until the following circumstances arose:—

1. A class of men with no other means of gaining a living than by selling their power to labour, as individuals, to other individuals who owned the money capital. This capital the latter used—in part—to pay wages to the former, in return for the right to control for a specific time the use of their labour power.

2. The development of an economic and social system, in which the ancient and mediæval conception of production for direct use had faded, and the produce of articles, even of prime necessity, for exchange on an open market had become the rule.

3. The existence of a home and European, extending to a world-wide, market for the purchase of these commodities.

4. The accumulation of capital in private hands in sufficient amount to give the country, which had reached this stage of

economic development, the money power essential to begin and carry on the new system on a large scale.

5. The invention of new machines, motive force and processes of industry, which should render it impossible for the wage-earners, as individuals and as a class, to compete in any way successfully with the capitalists for the possession of these great means of production. This put all new discoveries and inventions at the disposal of the employing class; divorcing the workers more and more completely from any control over the instruments and tools and machines of production used by them as wage-earners.

Industrial capital, in the sense of profit-making capital, is of recent growth; and has been disguised from the perception of people in general by the carelessness of historians, of whom Mommsen was a prominent offender, in applying the views of capital which obtained in the nineteenth century to the totally different conditions of ancient times. Similarly, with the forms of capital existing in the Middle Ages. Even in our own day, in the midst of the highly developed profit-making capitalism of the present century, which is spreading its influence all over the civilised world, we read such definitions as "Capital is stored-up labour devoted to the production of more wealth." We are assured also that "capital" and "labour" have no antagonistic interests, and that the capitalist form of production for exchange and profit is and must be permanent. The owners of chattel slaves of old time suffered from the same hallucination. The feudal nobles who succeeded them held a similar view about the inevitability of serfdom. As Marx wrote: "Before the bourgeois system became general there was history; but with the installation of capitalism and wagedom history came to end. Capital producing for profit out of the unpaid labour of hired workers, capital whose possessors own and control factories, workshops, mines, ships, machinery, raw material, means of transport and last, not least, the labourers themselves as a class: this form of capital it is which in its earlier and later stages is destined to be the eternal mistress of production for the entire human race, according to the accredited representatives of the capitalists themselves." About that they have, or had until lately, no doubt.

Let us take the second group of elemental conditions from

which this wholly new and previously unthought-of capital arose. Obviously, the existence of propertyless persons, men, women and children, so completely emancipated from previous conditions as to be able—that is to say, forced—to sell their bodily power in order to subsist, is the primal necessity for the form of production which had slowly developed out of previous economic and social arrangements. It was a growth like other growths. Let all the other essential conditions exist and this fail, then the whole superstructure tumbles down. England first provided the basis for the capitalist system of production for profit; and for this reason the island of Great Britain, with its genuine proletariat, became the classic ground for investigation into the genesis of modern industrial capital.

During this development of the proletarian class at home, commerce and piracy, negro slavery and conquest, wholesale cheating and sheer robbery, were providing the nascent class of English profiteering industrialists with the capital necessary to take advantage of the wage-earning labourers, who were thus being made ready for their operations on a large scale. The hoarded wealth of India, seized and brought home by the early invaders, and afterwards remitted more legally and systematically by the authorised agency of the East India Company, provided the bulk of the necessary resources. The West Indian colonial system, based upon the toil of imported black slaves from Africa, and the nefarious opium traffic with China, also added to the accumulation of capital previously piled up by the persistent attacks on land and on sea against the Spanish colonies, where vast riches had been gathered and sent to Spain by equally nefarious methods. The history of this long course of rapine is well known. But the early records of plunder and the careers of our bold but unscrupulous freebooters are set forth in prose and in verse among the greatest glories of England's commercial success and rising maritime supremacy. That the British Empire in India, for example, was built up and maintained by methods of conquest and annexation well-nigh as ruthless as those which marked the rise of the Roman power was recognised and denounced by a few high-minded Englishmen at the time, but has scarcely even yet been acknowledged by our own countrymen or by the world at large. Yet, when surveyed without prejudice, it is clear to any student that the origins of

the capital which enabled England to come to the front at the end of the eighteenth, and during the greater part of the nineteenth century as the leading industrial and commercial country of the world, were worthy of that period which commenced with the expropriation of the people from the land in Great Britain itself; and was followed by a reign of cruel exploitation of men, women and children in English factories to which it is difficult to find a parallel, even in the horrors of ancient chattel slavery. Here, once more, we are face to face with the incapacity of man to understand or to mitigate the inevitable consequences of his own greed and rapacity, or to comprehend that the increase of the powers of the race to produce wealth with less labour might be turned to the ever-growing advantage of all, and not to the accumulation of riches for the few.

Those who saw this truth, amid the welter of economic change around them, were unable to impress their opinions upon the mass of their countrymen. But the brilliant and true statements of Robert Owen in 1802 that wealth might, even then, be made as plentiful as water, and that national co-operation for production was the only way to arrive at this desirable result, were derided more than seventy years later by Engels as Utopian Socialism. It was Utopian only in the sense that Owen appreciated, a hundred and twenty years, or four generations, ago, what we of to-day are only just beginning, as a nation, to understand and tentatively to realise. He and those who worked with him, and the Chartists who were his later contemporaries, did not fully grasp the slow historic movement of economic development and popular consciousness: slow still, in the early part of the nineteenth century, though the increase in the power of man over nature, in the production and distribution of wealth, was proceeding with a rapidity wholly unprecedented in the thousands upon thousands of years of earlier social growth. As it was, the class war and the economic, social and political antagonisms arising out of the new system have still to work their way until the mass of the people are able to comprehend the real facts of their own surroundings; then, by overmastering their own previous ignorance, they will qualify themselves to administer the still higher stage of human evolution which is the inevitable outcome of capitalist supremacy.

To return. By 1765 all was prepared for the great industrial

revolution in Great Britain. There was a large, growing population of simple wage-earners, men, women and children divorced from the soil and destitute of property. There were also the Irish—now undergoing a process of expropriation like that which Englishmen had undergone, but in a harsher shape—ready to cross the Irish Channel when needed, in order to compete with Englishmen on a still lower standard of life. The capital necessary to build factories, purchase machinery, buy raw materials and pay wages had been accumulated from without, and the new and powerful forces of production and distribution were being provided at home. Division of labour among workers, giving to each labourer one small monotonous task, segregated from the entire whole of which it was destined to form a part—so bitterly commented upon by Adam Smith as ruinous to the worker in every way—had already paved the way for the concentration of bodies of wage-earners under one roof. This form of manufacture, prior to the establishment of the great factory industry, had brought such competition to bear upon the less organised individual workers in certain trades that thus, also, the struggle for life among the destitute labourers was increased. "Why," asked one important economist, "do large undertakings in the manufacturing way ruin private industry but by coming nearer to the simplicity of slaves?" It was this simplicity of slavery under capitalism that had now begun in earnest; though Sir James Stuart himself, who asked the question, had as little conception as the rest of the terrible fate which production solely for profit, with the aid of the great inventions now coming into use, was preparing for the coming generation. All these great inventions, discoveries and improvements, so far as they were applicable to industry and production, fell into the hands, not of the people at large, but of the capitalist class who used them invariably against the interests of the wage-earners — wage slaves, as Sir James Stuart in effect called them—who were entirely at their command.

## CHAPTER XXVI

## USELESS REVOLTS AGAINST CAPITAL

It is only when the various economic and social developments are put in order of date that we can understand the cumulative effect upon Great Britain which produced the astonishing results that followed. Before this remarkable series of changes took place struggles between labour and capital were by no means uncommon, and laws were passed giving the justices of the peace powers to fix fair rates of wages in the interest of the workers between employers and employees. The latest important strike under these conditions that I can trace took place in the year 1756. It was between the weavers of wool and their masters. The justices were accused by the weavers of refusing to comply with the law for fixing an adequate rate of wages. This led to a definite revolt, by which, in spite of the difficulties confronting them, such as the resolute attitude of the masters and the inclination of the lower grade of employees to give way and surrender, the weavers won. The year of this struggle is worth noting, for it may be taken as practically recording the end of the old system of antagonism between handicraftsmen as such and the capitalism of that stage of industry.

Shortly thereafter the greatest purely industrial revolution of all time began. Its steps forward may thus be traced by the improvements in cotton and wool machinery and the system of communications, with the dates of the following inventions:—

*Everett.*—Machine for weaving wool, 1758. Machine destroyed by workers, 1758.

*Hargreaves.*—First carding and spinning machines, destroyed by the workers themselves, 1764-1767.

*Arkwright* (who for his spinning inventions plundered Highes and other inventors right and left).—1769.

*Crampton.*—Spinning jenny and mule, 1779.

*Watt.*—Steam-engine providing motive power, 1773-1784.

*Cartwright.*—The loom, leading to the power-loom, 1785.

General coal and iron development from 1780 and onwards.

*Whitney.*—Separation of cotton from seeds, 1793.

*Jacquard.*—Loom, 1811.

*Macadam.*—Highroads, 1811.

Coal, hot blast, etc., from 1784.

*Telford.*—Improvement of Macadam system laying down great roads throughout England and Wales.

Canals (Bridgewater), 1758.

*Bell, Fulton.*—Steamboats, 1857 onwards.

*Stevenson.*—The development of railways from tramways. First railway, 1830. Main system completed, 1848.

The expansion in population and wealth during this period from, let us say, 1780, was quite unprecedented up to that time. In regard to population, the growth was remarkable not only in the mere numbers but in proportion to the time required.

Thus the increase in the hundred and twenty years from 1630 to 1750 is estimated at 800,000, or from 5,700,000 to 6,500,000, or at the average of no more than 66,000 a year. From 1750 to 1800, however, there was an addition of upwards of 3,000,000; from 1801 to 1821 a further increase of more than 2,000,000; in the ten years, 1821 to 1831, another 2,000,000, giving at the latter date a total population of 14,000,000; while in 1841 the population amounted to nearly 19,000,000, or roughly about 80 per cent. more than the total for 1801. This was a phenomenal rise, which was accompanied by an increase in mechanical power of production, largely worked by women and children, calculated at the time as equal to the labour power of 80,000,000 men, but was probably a very great deal more. Out of the increased population not fewer than 1,000,000 were poor Irish driven from their homes, who were coming over to Great Britain at the rate of 50,000 a year to compete, as stated above, with British labourers on a lower standard of life. By far the greater proportion of this increased number of persons in the island were propertyless wage-earners, engaged in manufactures in the towns. The proportion of families engaged in agriculture had actually fallen. In 1801 it was 35 per cent. of the whole; in 1814 but 25 per cent. The addition in the whole country to agriculture was only 7¼ per cent. Yet, so greatly had even agricultural methods improved, that in forty years the production of wheat alone had increased yearly to the extent of

44,000,000 bushels, or sufficient for the consumption of an extra 5,500,000 persons at the rate of eight bushels per head.

Production and trade, profits and accumulations went up by leaps and bounds in the same period. Nothing so amazing had ever before been seen in all economic history; not even when the treasures of the Mediterranean basin were being poured into the lap of the Roman aristocracy. It was this sudden increase of wealth, and the development of England's supremacy in industry and commerce which enabled our country to make head against the vast power of Napoleon, and eventually to defeat that great general and administrator. Even during the war itself the riches of the capitalists and landlords increased enormously. The figures themselves look small in comparison with recent statistics for Great Britain and other countries, especially the United States of America. Germany and Japan also have exhibited extraordinary progress within the past forty years. But when we examine the ratio of development prior to the rise of English capitalism, the years between 1801 and 1841 or 1848 constitute an unprecedented epoch in human history. Not a single department but showed phenomenal expansion. Leaving exports and imports aside, as being possibly capable of more than one explanation, we find that public buildings, inhabited houses of considerable rental, the growth of large steam factories, the value of real and personal property, and the greatly improved communications all gave evidence of extraordinary prosperity for the rich. Times of crisis and apparent depression barely checked the general advance. Fire insurance, which only amounted to £230,000,000 in 1801, ran up to over £800,000,000 in 1848. In England and Wales alone the rental of real property increased by £40,000,000 in thirty years. The whole of the well-to-do classes shared in these surprising results, and fortified their economic and social positions in every way.

But what was going on among the mass of the people? In my *Historical Basis of Socialism* (1883) I gave an account of the frightful state of things for the wage-earners which accompanied this rise of wealth for the propertied classes. This survey was based upon official reports and Parliamentary papers, and strengthened by the admirable investigations of foreign observers, as well as by the fine, self-sacrificing work done by the great Chartist agitators and statesmen, with the seathing criticisms of

the noble Robert Owen and the powerful denunciations of Sadler, Oastler and other champions of the people. Since then others have worked in the same field. The public, therefore, have nowadays a general but superficial knowledge of what went on in Great Britain in those long-drawn years of horror for the workers, when the capitalists of this island had things all their own way. Conditions for large sections of the workers are very bad in Great Britain even now, a hundred years later. But in the early part of the nineteenth century the atrocities committed by the employers upon the men, women and children who were forced to sell their labour power to those exploiters of mankind exceed, in continuous and calculated infamy, the general sufferings of the workers in the times of chattel slavery and serfdom.

During the whole of the fifty years when capitalism was fastening its grip upon this country wages were very low and prices were high. It was impossible for a man alone to keep his wife and family decently upon the pittance he could command for his labour from the capitalists. So keen was the competition of the propertyless wage-earners that remuneration fell below the standard of life necessary to keep the labourers in health. Then women and children were dragged into the slave factory. The scenes in the mines of Egypt and Athens described by Diodorus Siculus and others, the tales of brutality under feudalism recorded by the annalists of the Middle Ages, refer to adult men and women. Children suffered in the homes, but their misery was not, as a rule, created deliberately by the slave-owners or serf-owners.

But in Lancashire and Yorkshire, in the halcyon times of *laissez-faire*, women and children were the principal victims of the inhuman greed of the profit-making class. Women were overworked, in the factories above ground and in the mines below ground, to such an extent that the whole future of our race was jeopardised. The doctors who denounced the entire system from this point of view, and pointed out its dangers for the nation, the official inspectors who exposed the dreadful abuses rising out of these anarchical proceedings in regard to family life, the humanitarian politicians and agitators who tried to shame the capitalists into decent behaviour and stir up public opinion against them—one and all failed to obtain any reforms, or any effective reduction of hours of labour, for fully half-a-

century. With the children of tender years it was even worse, especially with those who were sent out of the workhouses in order that the capitalists might have their will of them in their factories and workshops. These wretched infants were systematically worked to death by their employers, toiling, under constant fear of the lash, from twelve to fifteen hours out of the day.

This was the climax of horror. The facts were published far and wide. How the employers crushed the very life out of these babes, in order to make more profit for themselves, was well known and discussed in every city of Great Britain. Tremendous efforts were made by noble men to put a stop to this frightful slaughter of the innocents. All to no purpose for many a long year. The philanthropists of capital were destitute of any human morality. Even when a law was passed to restrict this liberty of unlicensed slave-driving for defenceless children it was not accompanied by any means of enforcing its prohibitions, and the employers simply went on as before. Their motto was: "Buy cheap, sell dear. Labour is only a commodity like other commodities. Children are the cheapest and most easily squeezed commodity of that type." Therefore they declared it was to the interest of the country they should be worked to death as their fathers and mothers were. No wonder that the toilers of Lancashire were worn out at the rate of ten years to a generation.

All the while new machinery, which had ruined handicraft and had been used to maintain a permanent fringe of unemployed upon the labour market, to keep down the rate of wages in the factories, was piling up wealth at a pace previously unknown. Men who, like Owen, could compare the slavery of the West Indies, and of the Southern States of the great American Republic, with the condition of the free workers under the domination of capital in Great Britain, one and all declared that the chattel slaves and their children were in every way—in food, clothing, housing, hours of labour, treatment in sickness, even in education—far better off than the wage slaves of their native land. It is indeed the truth that British wage slavery during the rising period of capitalism was worse in many respects than any slavery previously known on the planet.

If, therefore, there was ever in history a time when forcible revolt in any shape was justifiable, when men were righteously

impelled to use whatever means came to hand for the purpose of freeing themselves from unendurable, unmerciful and sordid slave-driving oppression, that time was the period from 1780, or a few years before, to 1841-1848 in this country. Where greed for gain and the certainty of procuring it was concerned, religion, morality, mercy, good feeling had no place whatever with the governing class. Freedom for them meant the unlimited right to suppress the economic and social freedom of the mass of their fellow-countrypeople, and to crush down, imprison, torture or hang all who dared to champion the rights and welfare of the mass of the people against this baleful supremacy. For the greater part of this half-century or more freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of combination were to a large extent quite illusory freedoms; and when admitted in name they were suppressed in reality. Men who agitated for some reasonable and beneficial social reforms were arrested and imprisoned for words they never uttered. Others were transported for life, and not a few were hanged for treason which they never committed, on evidence that would not bear the slightest impartial examination. Political influence the people had none. The House of Commons and the House of Lords were both against giving even a modicum of the suffrage to the workers. All such legal outlet as existed for the ventilation of grievances could be, and often was, stopped. Men who publicly attacked the capitalists and their Government under such circumstances did so at the risk of their liberty and even of their lives. Nor did the various administrations hesitate to resort to the lowest treachery, in order to provoke the people into action where success was impossible, and repression could be safely exercised, or to suborn spies and traitors who could be relied upon to betray plots which did not exist.

Hence, I repeat, there never was a time, even under the most ruthless tyranny, when "direct action," or revolt against the possessing classes, could be more justly defended than in those terrible days in Great Britain. A new and dreadful slavery had been constituted, from which there was no escape and no relief. Penal servitude for life for adults, overwork and crushing physical conditions for women, tortures and working to death for children. No leisure, no pleasure, no education. Constant anxiety that even the miserable weekly pittance, barely sufficient to

keep body and soul together, might be withdrawn, owing to the installation of new improved machinery and consequent "over production." And all this hideous Malebolge of despair, into which the victims of capitalism had been suddenly plunged, came upon our people almost unprepared. They had not grown up in this state of things, like the slaves and serfs who were their economic ancestors. Therefore they felt their sufferings the more. If ever violent revolution seemed not only rightful but probably successful, then was the time. The dominant class was unpopular and ill-mannered. Its brutality was recognised. The force at its disposal through the Government was by no means overwhelming. The numbers of the wage-earners in proportion to the sections of society which lived upon their labour were larger than they have ever been since. Everything seemed favourable to a great and victorious uprising of the people against unbearable wrongs.

Moreover, the opportunity for such an upheaval was ever present. Just as the ruthless pressure of profiteering capitalism was beginning to be seriously felt, the twenty years' war with Napoleon began. In all probability the political and economic position of the wage slaves might have been considerably improved had the great Corsican won. The mass of the population had absolutely nothing whatever to lose. Certainly the war gave the oppressed class a better chance—not of complete emancipation, for which the economic development was unfortunately not ripe—but at least of putting the fear of man into the hearts of their worst enemies at home, and of establishing forthwith those limited improvements which were not even begun in earnest until nearly half-a-century later. To talk of patriotism was preposterous, in view of the conditions of the workers summarised above from official reports.

Yet success was not to be. The mass of our people, ill-educated and ignorant as they are now, were far worse informed then. Their means of communication were still very bad, thus rendering a widely organised revolt extremely difficult. There was no general military training, and arms were not readily procurable. Trade unionism was in its infancy, and trade combinations as far as possible were repressed by law. No recognised portion of the clergy took the side of the workers and kept the local rebels in touch with one another, as the "hedge priests,"

Ball and others did, centuries before, during the Peasants' War. But notwithstanding all these difficulties a partial victory might have been achieved had not the wage-earners, through their lack of education, directed their attack on a wholly wrong point.

When vastly improved machinery is introduced into any branch of production, obviously the manual craftsmen in that particular industry are liable to be interfered with very seriously indeed. The superior efficiency of the new machine, and its consequent ability to turn out more, and therefore cheaper, articles with much less human labour than before, tends to throw men and women, working with their hands on the old methods, out of work, and to reduce the wages even of those who continue in employment. There is no immediate compensation for this dislocation, nor is there any until much later, even if then. Three hundred years before the inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright, Cartwright and Jacquard were used as practical means of spinning and weaving in England, the machine of a foreign inventor was destroyed by German weavers, and the inventor was clubbed to death. These weavers saw that the machine threatened the well-being of their trade by cheaper production, and took the shortest and to their minds the most practical way of putting an end to a mechanical device which must promptly put their hand labour at a disadvantage. English weavers three hundred years later came to the same conclusion as the Germans. They smashed up Everett's machine, as stated, in 1758, and Hargreaves' in 1764. But this time conditions, economic and social, being ready for the adoption of the improved processes, they failed to check the advance, however harmful it might be to themselves, by individual or local destruction. The Juggernaut car of human progress was too well equipped to be arrested by such primitive methods. Machinery made way rapidly in small industrial centre after small industrial centre. Cheaper production and more effective organisation had their inevitable influence. Skilled cotton and wool workers were thrown out of employment, and wages were rapidly reduced all round.

Thereupon, instead of endeavouring to obtain control of the machines—which, as a matter of fact, they could not have done at that stage—instead of supporting the men who advocated strong political action—the Duke of Richmond brought a Bill

for universal suffrage into the House of Lords in 1792—great mobs in the industrial centres attacked the machines themselves, not their proprietors, and smashed them up. Reasoning as they did that the machines were the cause of their impoverishment, as they undoubtedly were, this course of action was natural enough. There can be no doubt at all that machines in the cotton and wool trades were being used against the interest of the workers, were reducing their wages, lowering their standard of life and weakening their economic and social independence all round. This opinion, becoming widely spread and increasing in vehemence as years passed on, led to the more or less organised revolt of the so-called Luddites, who set to work to destroy the machines systematically, partly because of their admitted economic effect, partly because they belonged to the masters, whom the wage-earners regarded with justice as slave-drivers and blood-suckers of the worst type—far worse in every way than the usurers against whom laws still stood on the Statute Book, though rarely enforced. Those Luddites, then, destroyed machinery and burnt factories in many of the large towns. In Blackburn, by force and fire, they made a clean sweep of the entire machine industry; in Nottingham they did the same, and so elsewhere. Throughout the years just before the end of the war the state of things became really serious. In 1810 and 1811 affairs had got so far that anarchistic success throughout the factory districts seemed possible.

The Government was alarmed, and used all the means that class administrations invariably resort to when the rights of property are threatened in order to suppress incipient insurrection. Every kind of repressive expedient was brought into service to crush the rebels. Hangings were common, imprisonment of suspected persons became the rule, spies and what the French call agents of provocation were used to incite rioting, for the purpose of giving the excuse for relentless reaction, and could be found in numbers in all the manufacturing centres. Favourable as events seemed to the rioters and revolutionists, they failed to shake the power of the dominant classes and their representatives. It was not even necessary to repeal the Habeas Corpus Act, though all the time the results of the war were by no means encouraging, and the spirit of revolution was, to all appearances, rife throughout the country. Lack of compre-

hension of the economic facts around them, defective organisation all through, want of really capable leaders, inability to stir the country at large to a sense of the harm being done, and the mistake of directing their main attacks on machinery, instead of upon the political and social causes of oppression, ruined the entire movement. It is very doubtful, however, whether complete success, as already suggested, could have been achieved in any case. Unpleasant though it is to accept the conclusion, it is clear that in this instance, as in others, revolts against a rising economic system, as capitalism undoubtedly was at this date, cannot by themselves anticipate the course of the entire evolution. Such violent protests do unquestionably rouse the popular intelligence, and keep alive that sense of freedom and desire for independence which lead the way to complete transformation, when the general development has been unconsciously made ready for the next great change. But until then the noblest pioneers must be content to do their work and sacrifice their lives for the sake of generations to come.

There was another and more formidable series of outbreaks of discontent and accompanying attempts at violence when the war came to an end. The peace of 1815, and the reactionary policy of the Government which followed, made the condition of the people still worse than it was before. Poverty and oppression of the most fearful description pervaded the whole country. From one end of Great Britain to another agitation went on, in spite of all the persecution that followed, and great meetings were held, at which demands were urged and resolutions passed in favour of a complete revolution. Even London, which had not felt the pressure of the factory industry to any considerable extent, was stirred. The enactment of the Corn Laws which, in 1815, disallowed any import of corn until the price had reached 80s. a quarter, provoked Londoners to action, and the metropolis rose in open revolt. So threatening was the aspect of affairs that in 1817 the Government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act. A large portion of the middle class was provoked, by this and other repressive proceedings, to make common cause with the incensed people. In the face of every danger of imprisonment and execution, downright subversive opinions, which would be accounted revolutionary even to-day, a hundred years afterwards, were publicly expressed throughout the length

and breadth of the land. There was no effective political outlet for the discontent even of the well-to-do.

From 1815 to the passing of the middle-class Reform Bill of 1832 the country was in one continuous turmoil. That Bill was a miserable compromise. It crippled the power of the aristocrats and swept away some of the political corruption, but it handed over Great Britain to an even more insidious domination than that of the class whose rule was shaken.

Under their new Poor Law the poverty-stricken people became criminals, in much the same sense as the masterless men of the time of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. They were swept into workhouses which were no better than ill-found gaols. Yet, though there were risings and revolts and secret societies and anarchist propaganda of direct action, there was still no revolution. Though leaders were now coming to the front of the highest ability and character, though the speeches made, and the fly sheets distributed by tens of thousands, were of the most incendiary character, the people at large were still more difficult to rouse to political or forcible action than they were in the earlier years of the century. In fact the Luddites, with their systematic attacks on machinery and the factories which housed it, were the most effective and best organised agents of attack upon capital and machine-aided wage slavery up to 1832-1833.

This is remarkable, since the popular political and economic writings of the time showed the clearest possible conception of the real functions of profiteering capital. They prove how recent was its growth, how merciless its operation on the well-being of the people, how destitute of all morality in its social relations, and how futile any assaults upon its power would be which did not succeed in substituting control by the workers and wage-earners for the overlordship of this class. A careful study of the pamphlets, books and orations they issued on behalf of the wage-earners, proves to demonstration that the leaders of that date were thoroughly grounded in the knowledge that the toilers had now become the human tools of the owners of the means of production; that wage slavery was merely chattel slavery in disguise; that though workers as individuals had ceased to be at the mercy of special slave or serf owners as individuals, yet wage-earners, as a class, were the slaves of the capitalists as a class, the only freedom they possessed being a

right, by no means always easily exercised, of changing their masters. Their miserable wages were the inevitable result of their lack of property. "A slave," wrote Cobbett, "is a man who possesses no property."

In spite of all these vigorous and unwearying efforts, by a series of noble and disinterested agitators, to instruct and move their countrymen, not until 1834 to 1838 did the first really organised and class-conscious working-men's combination in Great Britain take shape. This was the famous Chartist Movement, the records of which have, as far as possible, been suppressed and kept under by the literary representatives of the classes in possession. So true is it that all history up to the present time has to be rewritten, and all the terrible facts of the past of the human race revealed in their true proportion, before we can hope to master the truth about the long martyrdom of man, from the break-up of the gentile and communal period, onwards, to the forms of private-property production and exchange. In all this, for the most part, ethic has no say; human sympathy plays little or no part. For the mass of the people it is ever the same. Each generation in turn enters upon its mournful heritage of suffering, and passes on its burden of never-ending sorrow to the next, and the next, and the next.

What closes the eyes of the many to the inevitable outcome of slow and relentless evolution? Why is it that even the ablest and best thinkers of the period are unable to understand or to foresee? How does it come about that, in our own country, where our boasted liberty is held up as a lesson to the world, leaders and people have alike failed to apprehend fully, or to control and handle effectively, the evolution of the economic forms and social domination which have grown up under their eyes? The right answer to these questions may never be given. Certain it is that, looking down the centuries, we see mankind as a whole slowly groping their way, unconsciously and incapably, through the thick forest and brushwood of prejudice and ignorance, dragging the car of progress, which must eventually crush them, wearily in their track.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## THE LIMITS OF HISTORIC DETERMINISM

THERE were three great and original books written in the nineteenth century. Their authors were English, German and American. Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Marx's *Kapital*, and Morgan's *Ancient Society* constituted an epoch in the progress of human knowledge and thought. Unfortunately, owing to the prejudices of the dominant class in all civilised countries with regard to private property and the origin and permanence of the monogamous family, the two latter did not immediately obtain the general recognition which accompanied the publication of the first. Even now, for example, educated Americans are often found who do not recognise the eminence of Lewis H. Morgan. Persistent efforts have been made on both sides of the Atlantic to belittle and misrepresent the economic theories and historical surveys of Karl Marx, whose works are, nevertheless, more studied to-day than ever. That is to say, now, thirty-seven years after their author's death, sixty years after the appearance of his first important work, *Zur Kritik der Politischen Œkonomie*, and nearly as long since the publication of the first volume of *Das Kapital*, Marx's theories and analyses are not only widely accepted, as the foundation of sound economic teaching, on the continent of Europe, but even in our English universities—always the last seats of learning to consider any new views on political economy—his investigations can no longer be advantageously boycotted. No doubt the fact that Marx was an active revolutionist as well as a powerful thinker, and a virulent denouncer of the frightful inhumanity engendered by capitalism, wage slavery and the entire system of production for profit, affected the judgment of the educated champions of the class which he attacked. They could not separate his economics and sociology from his revolutionary propaganda and pamphlets.

Examining any human society in the long progress of man-

kind, from the earliest times upwards, we find that, taken as a whole, it is influenced and moulded by the manner in which its members produce their food, manufacture their raiment, build and decorate their houses, construct their vessels, and obtain the large or small articles of luxury which they desire. That is to say, the foundation of an association of human beings is the method of creating and distributing wealth at the period when we examine into its constitution. Customs, laws, religions, forms of worship, arts and culture generally, grow out of the means of satisfying the collective and individual needs of the community. The members of the society in the early days are themselves so completely a part of the entire structure that they accept the conditions under which they are born, and live in the relations to which they are accustomed from their birth, ignorant, for the most part, whence they came or whither they are going. The movement within the society or community, if movement there be, is wholly unconscious. Men and women, under such conditions, are merely sentient automata, guided by their social and almost instinctive customs. Their relations to other men and their families are regulated, unknown to them, by the material facts of their surroundings and social inheritance, which they are unable to understand or, consciously, to modify.

When, however, these material conditions of producing and distributing wealth undergo a change, then the whole of the other relations built up upon the previous methods of satisfying social needs must, in the long run, be transformed also. Thus the modifications in material conditions and methods of production, unnoticed at the time and unconsciously accepted, act upon the whole of the human relations which make up the entire superstructure of the society, in the body of which these modifications and changes have occurred. Customs, laws, political institutions and all the arrangements which were previously regarded as unchangeable and permanent, must now submit to such alteration as may bring them into harmony with the fresh economic forms. A new society has been growing up in the old society, which in due time must force the old society to revolutionise itself, whether the members of that society desire to do so or not. What had previously been generally advantageous now becomes harmful. What had before ensured peace

now tends to engender war. What was a pleasing conservatism now shows itself as obstructive hindrance or downright reaction. No portion of the existing human relations can permanently withstand the current of change, thus brought about by the simple development of the modified forms of material creation of wealth.

So the process goes on from age to age, from generation to generation, sometimes so slowly that the forms of the existing system seem destined to endure for ever, sometimes with greater rapidity, but always very gradually. Every age and each successive generation believes that its own social relations will continue as they are, even when the material relations of production below have already doomed them as obsolete. Communal society, chattel slave society, serf society, free individual society, bourgeois society—all except communal society having their special gradation of classes, with their mutual antagonisms—each in turn regarded themselves as the last irremovable form of human society. It was both futile and criminal, they thought, for the classes representing the new economic forms to try to overthrow, or even greatly to alter, the existing social relations. Thus men think with reference to the bourgeois, or capitalist competitive wage slave society under which we live to-day. But here, too, the economic material relations have changed, are changing and will change. This will inevitably lead to a transformation of the entire social superstructure, consequent on the substitution of new forms for old, the abolition of wage slavery, and the establishment of co-operation without classes.

That in the main is the doctrine of the Material Development of History, or the theory of historical determinism, which has so widely influenced opinion of late years in the growing Socialist movement. Its more vehement advocates have put this theory forward as the solution of all the problems of human society: the philosopher's stone of all social investigation. But this view cannot be accepted as any full explanation of human development. For we find that forms of production in agricultural communities, which remained unchanged for hundreds and even thousands of years, accommodated themselves to widely different social superstructures. Thus, in China and in India the main forms of small production on the land and in handicraft are almost precisely similar. Yet it is difficult to imagine two systems of association and government more widely differ-

ent than those subsisting in these two great and populous empires. In China there are no castes, no fixed and immutable creeds, no wide dissemination of the precious metals on a large scale, almost universal education and no warrior spirit. In India everything is totally different. Caste, religion, general lack of education prevail, and wars were the rule rather than the exception, prior to the European conquest. It would be absurd to say that here forms of production governed, either directly or indirectly, the shape of the society above. The same forms resulted in quite other social relationships, and this not for a short period but for generations. Similar and almost equally striking illustrations can be drawn from the contrast between Egypt and Italy, where, apart from the difference of climate, the same small culture resulted in highly contrasted social forms.

Moreover, we have a striking example of the impossibility of accepting this general rule in the position of France and England. From the economic standpoint, France is still two or three generations at least behind Great Britain. Consequently, her political development ought to be similarly behindhand. But it is quite the reverse. France, with small peasant proprietorship controlling her chief industry, agriculture, and still in the early stage of the great factory industry, is a long way in advance of Great Britain politically. Her entire political constitution is, indeed, adapted to a far higher economic development than she has attained. Though, therefore, economic forms, inherited from the long past, do greatly and inevitably influence human development, and, in a period of rapid change of forms of production below, such as that of the last two centuries or more, the conflict between these modifications and the older methods is reflected in social antagonisms; yet the exceptions are so marked, in earlier epochs of human history, and extend over such vast areas of time, that it is impossible to accept the theory in its full meaning. Many other circumstances besides mere forms of production have to be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, there is another important element which is overlooked when the purely material monist theory of history is forced upon us. Thus it must be admitted that the general material progress of mankind is unconscious. Hitherto men have not been able, by understanding thoroughly the course of

their social evolution, to forecast their own immediate future, and lay scientific plans for the next stages in the development of the race. So far, it is clear, from the survey in the preceding chapters, that mankind has been dominated by its own unconscious growth. But this does not show that all the movements of our ancestors have been *wholly* engendered by material causes, or that all collective actions have been entirely divorced from psychologic motives, as the extreme monists contend. Granting even that economic causes account for many, if not most, of the great changes in human affairs and human conceptions, nevertheless, when society has arrived at a certain level, human psychology, running side by side with human development, generally also has its share in historic movements. Arising out of society, with the material economic conditions functioning throughout, this psychologic tendency exercises for short, and sometimes for relatively long, periods the dominant influence. There are great episodes in history which no conceivable manipulation of the material theory can explain without taking psychologic currents into account.

In this respect there is a similarity between society and the individual. By far the greater part of the processes of individual human life are automatic, and beyond the control of the person whose lungs, liver, stomach, eyes, ears, spleen, etc., do their material work independently, in the main, of his volition. But out of this sentient automatism a psychologic element is engendered in the highest mammals, which subsists in our own consciousness, has a reflex action upon the functions of the body of which it is itself a higher function, and comes within the scope of the individual mind and reason, as we speak of such action in its own being. This is not an element of the human animal outside matter. But it is related to matter in a different sense from the heart or the lungs, or even the instincts.

So with society. The minor operations of mere collectivity in society are unconscious and involuntary. This was more so in the past than it is to-day. But throughout history there have been cases where large numbers of people have been induced to do things which, whether advantageous or disadvantageous to them, justifiable or unjustifiable to their neighbours, cannot be put down as due to material influences pure and simple. That is to say, at particular moments, though the material de-

velopment goes on as before, the psychologic influence, whatever it may be and whencesoever it may arise, becomes for the time being the dominating factor. Examples of the psychologic, as overcoming the economic factor, on a large scale, are not far to seek. From the individual Malay who runs amok out of religious mania to the rise of the great Mohammedan religion is a very long way. The one we stigmatise as temporary lunacy, the other is one of the greatest episodes in the history of mankind. It would be difficult to attribute either wholly and solely to the material evolution of the individual or of the collection of tribes. The effect of the religion of Mohammed was tremendous from the beginning, and its influence, still unexhausted, has extended over many centuries. Yet at the time when the founder of the religion first preached his creed, the Arabs of pure race were living the life which their ancestors had lived for hundreds, and even thousands, of years before. No change whatever had taken place in their forms of production, pastoral or agricultural, for generations. None can be traced in action, when the Prophet of Allah made his appearance. Certainly, as Arabs, they were exercising no great influence upon the history or the development of the adjacent countries. The old fetishist idolatry and the old tribal customs remained as they had ever been. The aristocratic Arab gentes were still in control.

Mohammed was a personally impoverished member of one of these aristocratic gentes. The whole of the Arab tribes together, extending over a wide expanse of by no means fertile territory, amounted to fewer than 15,000,000 souls, women and children included. There was nothing whatever to show that this race was ready for one of the greatest movements of aggression and conquest the world has yet seen; nor were there any economic grounds at all that could account for the preaching and spread of a powerful new religion. If ever in human history the foundation and promulgation of a fighting creed was the work of one man, the faith of Islam was the work of Mohammed. He himself converted first his own family—no easy matter—and then, in spite of stupendous difficulties, persuaded his tribesmen, partly by force and partly by persuasion, to adopt the watchword of Allah, the one God, and Mohammed, his Prophet. For Mohammed, though he gathered round him able and devoted followers, had no Saul of Tarsus to take up, to organise, and to

philosophise his teachings. The whole propaganda hinged upon himself. It was not a religion of plunder at the start. It was a blind enthusiasm, divorced from any economic or material motive, a faith that removed mountains. All the ingenuity in the world will not accommodate this tremendous awakening of the Arabs to pure material, historic determinism.

When I was discussing the matter with Plechanoff, perhaps the ablest champion of the complete determinist theory, he argued that Mohammedanism might be an apparent exception to the general rule, which, with wider knowledge, could be harmonised with the full, unmodified Marxian theory. But that was a very wide assumption. Not only Mohammed himself, but Mohammedans, throughout the early days of their astounding victories, fought their best when the element of material gain was entirely eliminated, and they sacrificed their lives for God and his Prophet with the consciousness that in dying in such a cause Paradise would be their eternal portion. But if that accords with economic determinism, then words and thoughts have no clear meaning.

Here we have a distinct, and curiously powerful psychologic or religious influence, which, basing itself on a Monotheism expounded by one individual, who made no pretension to being in any way other than a man, who claimed no miraculous powers whatever, and had no cohort of male and female saints to conduct his believers in safety to Elysium, nevertheless so inspired his race with a belief in his religion that they could not refrain from going forth to propagate his doctrines with exhortation, fire and sword. So far did they carry matters on this non-material basis that, within a hundred years, they had conquered region after region far more numerously peopled than their own, sometimes with inhabitants who, before the advent of these fanatics, had shown themselves vigorous warriors, and were better equipped for battle than the Mohammedans who attacked and defeated them.

Again, we may take the antagonistic movement to this Mohammedanism which came centuries later. Can any reasonable man contend that the hermit Peter and those who first went forth with him were inspired with conceptions of wealth to be gained by retaking Jerusalem from the infidel? The very idea is absurd. Those crowds who followed the Christian illusionist

were filled full of zeal for the glory of God and His Christ—His Christ who had been crucified in the great Jewish city many centuries before, in order to save them from eternal fire. It was an outrage that this Holy City, about the history of which they knew little or nothing, should be in the hands of the infidel. Therefore they went forth from their homes, and perished by the thousand of famine and disease before they had got a tenth part of the way to their destination, where if they *had*, by some miracle, arrived, they would have been slaughtered like sheep. These men, women and children were not impelled upon their bootless and ruinous mission by any form of economic or material influence. Obviously, they were smitten with religious hallucination, exterior to all desire for material gain. Historic determinism had no voice in this matter. Knowing all the antecedents even, can we say, in the early Crusades, or in the case of Mohammed, that we could have predicted this immediate consequent ?

Here, then, are two great movements which produced an enormous effect on their time, whose history is well known. Both had their origin, not in any economic cause, or modification in the forms of production, but in purely psychologic influences, which, though arising out of material development, cannot be attributed to material action on the minds of those who took part in the religious manifestations.

All this argument would be quite unnecessary, but for the fact that the extreme monists of materialism have obtained a following for their rigid determinism which will not bear the test of examination. Illuminating as the theory is when properly interpreted, obvious as it seems, when once fully stated, that the forms of production do constitute the main basis of social superstructures, the whole conception is made ridiculous when its votaries refuse to recognise the demonstrable truth that similar forms of production sometimes have wholly dissimilar governments superimposed upon them. The fanatics of materialism divorced from mind, who are as superstitious as the fanatics of mind divorced from matter, damage their own theory when they claim to solve all problems with this single key.

But the acceptance of the doctrine leads to strange perversions on the other side. Thus the class antagonisms, which inevitably arise out of the economic relations of modern as of

ancient society, are frequently declared to be inspired by "ambition" and "hatred." Whereas it is quite impossible that hatred or love can affect the progress of economics, any more than they can the problems of mathematics. No man at present, reading of the sufferings inflicted upon slaves in the mines of antiquity, or in the legal torture chambers of the courts of justice, can fail to be horrified at such atrocities; nor can he peruse the records of the frightful treatment of children in the Lancashire cotton mills during the early part of the nineteenth century without bitter indignation against a class which piled up wealth and acquired social power by such practices. But the majority of men at the time felt no indignation; and we ourselves are used to cruelties enacted to-day which our descendants will hear of with indignation in their turn. Human pity influences but slowly the pressure of the economic force at the disposal of the dominant class. When profitable cruelty is put an end to by the higher ethic of an advancing society in one direction, it finds an outlet in another, until the time is ripe for a complete overthrow of the system.

Human development, we are told, is wholly unconscious, and men in society still nothing better than sentient automata. If, knowing all the antecedents, we are infallibly able to predict with accuracy the immediate consequent; if the antagonisms of classes, and of individuals as representatives of their classes, are eternal under existing conditions of human progress; if the members of the dominant class of the day are, like the rest of mankind, solely creatures of the surroundings into which they are born, brought up and trained; if, finally, it is impossible for any human being to rise out of the period that sees him grow up and develop—if all this is true, as purely material monism, divorced from psychology, declares it is, then, obviously, there is nothing moral or immoral under the sun. Slave-drivers of old, or the harshest of sweaters of our day, were, and are, no more responsible for their actions than sharks or alligators, tigers or boa-constrictors. Consequently, it is useless, as it is unscientific and unphilosophical, to denounce malefactors or glorify saints. Jack the Ripper and Sakya Mouni are on the same ethical plane; a Confucius or a Faraday is no better than a Rasputin. Each and all are acting upon predetermined lines laid down for them by their

surroundings from birth, from which it is impossible, given the prior conditions, that they should at any time diverge. Obviously we have here the controversy of predestination and free will transferred materially, from the mere individual, to society at large. In spite of the undeniable psychologic current, and individual examples of a higher ethic, there can, according to this view, be no individual or social morality until humanity arrives at the stage where collective and social influence is exercised by society as a whole; the causes of immorality, as we call it, being removed by social, material and intellectual conditions, which remove all, or nearly all, inducements to anti-social acts. When this level of material development is reached the whole problem of human relations will be revolutionised. The Ten Commandments will be again as completely "out-of-date" as they would have been if they had come down from Sinai in the old communal period. The social ethic, that is to say, will be collective and communal, as property and wealth become communal and collective. Moreover, under such social collectivism and co-operative communism, the material development will be reflected in the mentality of the society. A new state of society will bring about new virtues and new crimes. But, above all, man being freed from care as to material needs, psychology will have increasing influence upon the social evolution.

That is of the future. But does it follow that there is no psychologic influence or conscious action, on a lower plane, in the present? Can we assert that there has been no such influence in the past? This would be to accept the doctrine that, as the extreme monists contend, men in society are still mere sentient automata, that they are wholly creatures of material conditions which they are powerless, either individually or collectively, to modify, or to react upon, and that, consequently, there can be no conscious psychologic element in existing society at all. That is what the contentions of the fanatics of historic determinism, including Kautsky, when pushed to extremities, virtually amount to. But this is directly counter to human experience in more than one direction. Not only is there manifestly a psychologic current in human affairs, but it is gaining in relative force, as mankind gains in knowledge and consciousness of its surroundings and begettings. Only thus can society with its individuals, and individuals with their society,

intelligently comprehend, and, by comprehending, increasingly and capably guide, in part at least, their own development; social progress being admitted as the growing aim and object of all. What may be the limits of the two elements, purely material evolution and psychologic influence, we may be unable at any given moment to determine, but that the latter cannot safely be neglected is clear.

A survey of history shows that it is quite impossible to anticipate economic evolution by forcible action, or even greatly to accelerate an inevitable economic transformation by such means. Those who made these attempts, at most, brought to the front ideals which kept alive the hope, and strengthened the determination of the oppressed to take advantage of any future opportunity for successful revolt. On the other hand, the loss of leaders with knowledge, courage and initiative in the unsuccessful rising—and leaders of this character are indispensable and not easily replaced—brings about a period of discouragement among the survivors; while sheer reaction, which for a time crushes down progress, may also be the result of such failure. At present, when, in all economically advanced countries, and particularly in Great Britain, economically the most advanced of all, the comparatively short-lived capitalist system is manifestly making way for collective administration and communist and co-operative production and distribution, it is more than ever essential to keep these things in mind.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## THE RISE AND FALL OF THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT

THERE are periods in the annals of Great Britain about which the truth has still to be told in a readable shape. This is certainly the case with the Chartist Movement. Owing to the fact that all the histories of the first sixty or seventy years of the nineteenth century, and that of the eventful generation from 1815 to 1848 in particular, have been written by authors wholly imbued with the ideas of the capitalist and profiteering middle class, or of the bourgeoisie as a whole, there is no general conception of the struggle then conducted by the Chartists and Radicals on behalf of the mass of the people. The details of that bitter conflict have been suppressed in the interest of that class. Consequently, little is known in our own country of the widespread democratic and Socialist agitation, which anticipated most of the social and political ideas that are so often attributed to foreigners. Even the names of the able, enthusiastic, self-sacrificing and persecuted leaders of the unceasing social and political propaganda, which stirred English society to its foundations, are forgotten; and, although they roused the spirit of revolt among the workers as it has never been roused since, the magnificent service they rendered is ignored.

Even the wage-earners of Great Britain, who owe nearly all they have gained to the Chartists, in the first instance, feel no gratitude whatever to the men who fought and fell in their splendid fight for the freedom of those who suffered in their own day, and of their successors, who now benefit by their work. These men strove for the complete emancipation of the wage-slave class. They knew, and they persistently preached, the great truth, that wage slavery is but chattel slavery in disguise. They spared no effort to convince their countrymen that the ownership of property lay at the foundation of all social freedom as of all social domination, and that, until the workers of a country owned the property collectively, which they had been

wholly deprived of individually, real personal liberty they could not possibly enjoy. This was as revolutionary a policy as any that is put before the proletariat of any country at the present time.

The Chartists, although divided in opinion on more than one important question, held together on the imperative necessity for palliative measures of the capitalist anarchy prevailing all around them. Even the physical force section, as opposed to the purely political section, were agreed as to this. They ran terrible risks in the hope of obtaining the whole of their demands; but they were, as a party, thoroughly practical and reasonable in their readiness and anxiety to obtain some portion of their claims at once. And this moderate policy, from the capitalist standpoint, was scarcely less dangerous or more criminal than the extreme view. It was the Chartists who agitated and clamoured and threatened, in order to save babes of tender years from being overworked, flogged and half-starved in the hideous slave dens, that the factories of the Lancashire and Yorkshire capitalists then were. It was the Chartists, and the noble Socialist, Robert Owen, who first endeavoured to cut down by law the excessive and physically ruinous hours of labour for all industrial toilers. It was the Chartists who worked, with the then small and feeble trade unions, to secure full rights of combination and of strikes for the workers of all grades. It was the Chartists who never ceased to demand a free, unlicensed Press, free speech and freedom of the vote for all male adults. It was the Chartists who persistently pointed out to the people that Tory, Whig, Liberal and Radical were only labels which, however much their owners might differ on mere political issues, counted for little or nothing, when the rightful claims of the people to public ownership of land and wealth came up for discussion.

Before entering upon a brief survey of the political work they did, it is well to describe what manner of men they were who entered upon this uphill struggle, to recall their names and to show the desperate difficulties against which they strove. In any other country than Great Britain these courageous agitators would be regarded as the heroes of the proletariat, martyrs of the rising faith in the co-operative solidarity of the whole body of workers. In England they failed; and glorious failure counts

for nothing during a competitive age. Yet Feargus O'Connor, George Julian Harney, Ernest Jones, Bronterre O'Brien, Sadler, Oastler, Stephens, Ball, Lovett, Henry Vincent and their associates will be remembered, and their good deeds recorded, in the new development, when all that they vainly strove for before their time is realised, in the course of the next few generations. They were capable of great things themselves, and they prepared the way for greater things for others. They were writers, organisers and orators of mark. As orators, at least four of them were equal to W. H. Fox, John Bright or Villiers, while their ideals were higher, their aspirations nobler, their power of expression more effective.

The memories and traditions of those stirring times all agree upon this. Such enormous crowds as were held spellbound in the open air at Kershal Moor and elsewhere by Stephens, Ball and others were never gathered together in England before or since. To such a crowd did Stephens address his famous declaration that the subject in hand for the men before him was, in reality, a knife-and-fork question: the material must precede the ideal in order that men should rise to a higher conception of what humanity was capable. But education was essential too. Many of those speeches are still to be found, as they were reported at the time. To another big audience Bronterre O'Brien, when asked whether the capitalist did not work as well as his wage-earners, replied: "Yes, he works, works hard, works o' nights. So does the wolf. He works, works hard, works o' nights. But the harder he works, my friend, the worse it is for the sheep." In like manner Lovett spoke and wrote strongly and sternly as to the position of the toilers of England. Possessed of no property but the force of labour in their bodies, they were the slaves of the men who owned all else.

The dominant class was furious against these men. Their speakers and writers were arrested, condemned, imprisoned, transported for life time after time. Little chance of justice had they in those days. Prejudiced judges, brutal and unscrupulous barristers, suborned juries: the verdict against them was assured, and their punishment settled before the prisoners came into court. Bronterre O'Brien was condemned to two years' imprisonment for words which it was afterwards proved

he never uttered. With others the same. No wonder that, under such conditions, with their Press under rigorous restrictions, with charges being trumped up against their leaders, every day, some of the hotter heads adjured their followers to resort to force. Stephens himself, like several others a Wesleyan minister, appealed to one of his vast assemblies to show whether they were ready to support his exhortations by arms. Hundreds of his hearers raised muskets aloft in their hands to show that they were.

Nor were local revolts under arms wholly unsuccessful. M. Léon Faucher, who certainly had no sympathy with Socialism, and still less with violent upheavals, writing to the *Temps* of the seven years when Chartist effort was strongest, declared that Great Britain had been in continuous and dangerous upset during the whole of that time. Nottingham Castle attacked and taken by rioters, Birmingham for three whole days in the hands of "the mob," 8000 to 10,000 miners out under arms in Wales, on account of the arrest and condemnation of Henry Vincent, and persistent unrest throughout the industrial districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, were events which went far to justify the French observer's statement. Of course the Government took strong steps to suppress these disorders—which, however, were entirely due to its own neglect of the abominable social conditions, and its refusal to apply any reasonable remedies. Even when laws were passed to check a few of the more notorious abuses, and to mitigate in some degree the horrors of the factory system, the ministry of the day, no matter what its political complexion, winked at the systematic infringement of its own ordinances by the employers.

As things were, even unorganised and premature resorts to violence might seem excusable, the administration of the day having proved itself wholly unwilling to act fairly by the people. It is still the fashion to say that our forbears were a cool, law-abiding, long-suffering, almost servile folk; that, however monstrous the oppression to which they were subjected, they always looked to peaceful political methods alone to obtain any partial redress or to secure any social advance; and that the history of that dismal epoch, prior to the passing and putting into operation of the first Factory Acts, offers marked evidence of the patience and resignation of the English

people. Nothing can be more contrary to the truth. The risings and riotings and insurrections were unsuccessful in the main, yet they had a large share in forcing the governing minority to grant important palliatives of the existing social anarchy.

But the movement of the people which was led by the Chartists gave organisation and consistence, also, to advanced political claims which had been put forward from the end of the eighteenth century; and the ablest leaders looked to political action rather than to armed force for obtaining reforms. It was from the political Charter, suggested, it was said, by Feargus O'Connor, that the Chartists were given their name. They advocated universal manhood suffrage, annual parliaments, payment of members, secret ballots and equal electoral districts all over the country. This programme was moderate and sensible enough, although two out of the five reforms desired have not been obtained nearly ninety years, or three generations, later—so slow is any real advance in Great Britain.

But that such a political programme should have aroused enthusiasm, as it unquestionably did, shows how devoted Englishmen were to political action as the best means for righting their social wrongs; while the fear and hatred which the formulation of these reasonable demands engendered among the possessing classes proves that they, on their side, were resolutely determined not to forgo one iota of that overwhelming political and economic domination which had been so strongly fortified by the purely middle-class Reform Act of 1832. The Chartists wished to give full political rights to the whole of the adult male population who created the wealth of the country, in order that they might use their political power for their own economic advantage. The capitalists and profiteers, on the other hand, were as anxious as ever to exclude the whole people from any effective political suffrage, in order to keep all social and political influence in their own hands. Nor were they content even with the supremacy that they held over the workers before their great political victory of 1832. There was still a further step to be taken in order to render the economic and social condition of the people more hopeless.

Whatever may have been the defects of the old Poor Law, it did, at least, secure to the poor some provision for old age, in the shape of relief from the rates for the aged in their own homes,

and for able-bodied labourers unable to obtain work by no fault of their own. They were thus not wholly at the mercy of the ruthless class which had them in its grip. Outdoor relief on a sufficient scale did afford the workers some subsistence at home, when the employers would otherwise have left them to starve. So the capitalists set to work, immediately on the realisation of their Reform Bill, to strengthen their own power over the mass of the people by the abrogation of the ancient law in favour of necessitous people, and the enactment of the new method for still further enslaving the propertyless class. This law was intended to remove from the unemployed all hope of any support, except under conditions which were even worse than the horrible factory toil from which they had temporarily escaped.

It was successful. The workhouses were dens of infamous oppression whose terrors are not even yet forgotten. The worst of starvation wages was better than these prisons, with their mental and physical torture. But since this abominable measure affected chiefly only the poorest of the poor, since it was supported by the most shameful misrepresentations, which still find currency, as to the natural laziness of the people, since the most preposterous exaggerations were spread abroad concerning the malefic effect of the old Poor Law, since, also, elaborate prose odes concerning the beneficent influence of capitalist production on British social life were spread abroad among the people—the ruling classes thought that this scheme of the employers to degrade the workers still further would be accepted without demur. It was not so.

Although the capitalist class controlled almost the entire Press, some of the workers at once recognised that the Act, hustled through the new and almost exclusively middle-class Parliament, was aimed against the interests of the entire working class. Especially was it directed at that growing, and already very large, section whose sole means of earning a livelihood was to find an employer to purchase their labour power (the only commodity they possessed) at mere subsistence wages, so long as they had health and strength enough to be profitable to the purchaser. These propertyless proletarians were also liable to suffer from periods of unemployment, through no fault of their own, but through the anarchical system of competition under

which they toiled. Gluts of commodities which they themselves produced, as well as the introduction of new and improved machines into their special line of work, might throw the most industrious men out, workless and starving, upon the streets at any time. From the same causes skilled artisans often found themselves in the same predicament. In such hard times all these working folk were forced into the workhouse and treated as if they were criminals, in order that, when trade revived, they might accept the lowest possible wages to escape from this squalid servitude. This naturally infuriated many leaders of the people.

Seeing the increasing propertyless crowd cheated out of any share in the political representation, which the pressure of the toilers had enabled the middle class to obtain for themselves, and then seeing this political power, so gained, at once unscrupulously used against the wage-earners, they became convinced that political action, or general agitation, by itself was thenceforward futile, unless supported by armed insurrection, or by organised strikes and direct action on a large scale. Both of these methods aimed obviously at immediate social revolution. It cannot be denied, furthermore, that the time seemed more ripe for such a general upheaval than it did even immediately after the Napoleonic War. There were grievances enough to justify almost any revolt. This is the excuse for the advocates and resorters to physical force. They were mistaken, but it was a natural mistake. However, they could not expect that the capitalists, in the full plenitude of their domination, would hesitate to use all possible measures to hamper and suppress their assailants. In this class war the bourgeoisie had all the decisive weapons in their hands, and they used them.

Yet the political and educational work done by the political Chartists, in spite of all hindrances, was amazing. Their difficulties were so great that it is not easy, in these days, to appreciate them fully. Though the towns were growing and communications were improving, with Telford's Macadamised roads and the commencement of railways, travelling was still very expensive and newspapers were very dear. Yet *The Northern Star*, the principal Chartist organ, which had a circulation of 50,000 copies, a very large number in those days, and *The Poor Man's Guardian*, as well as Cobbett's periodicals, exerted a great influence.

Pamphlets and fly-sheets also did their work, and helped on the spread of ideas promulgated at their meetings by the Chartist orators. By this constant agitation and teaching they succeeded in obtaining no fewer than 1,000,000 genuine signatures to a petition in favour of the democratic political proposals set forth above. This gigantic petition, as might have been expected, was treated with contempt by the House of Commons.

This is worthy of note, showing the attitude of the capitalists and their nominees towards genuine democratic demands, when they feel strong enough to flout them. That the Chartists should have worked on steadily for political changes in the face of all the obstacles they encountered, the unfair methods used to defeat them and the persecution to which they were subjected, says much for their honesty, enthusiasm and courage. As I have said, they have never in any way received the recognition they deserve. The champions of the capitalists and profiteers have been extolled as heroes; their memories are cherished as those of saints. The leaders of the people are deprived of bread when living and are begrudged stones when dead. It is the same all through history. The lives of the leaders of the dominant class of any epoch are written by the members of that class. They, being in possession of all the educational and literary facilities of their day, indite "classical" works, which are handed on from generation to generation; while the truth about their opponents, so far as it can be found, is left to be deciphered and recorded in a future age.

But it must be admitted that, even during the years of greatest Chartist activity, large sections of the workers themselves, whilst they had a clearer view of the inevitable antagonism between the wage-earners and wage-payers than their immediate successors, or their descendants, until to-day, were neither sufficiently educated nor well organised enough to force concessions from the governing minority. Although in 1824 the right of the skilled workers to combine was at last legally recognised, this did not at first lead very far. The effect was to constitute an "aristocracy of labour," which, as one of the ablest of the Chartist leaders foresaw and predicted, would act for many a long day as a buttress or defence of the capitalists, by severing the interests of the highly paid artisans from those of the lower-paid unskilled labourers, and by fixing the attention of this

aristocracy of labour upon the rates of the wages of the men in their own organisations, instead of upon the need of capturing the powers to produce and distribute wealth for the interest of all.

Although in the earlier stages of Chartism many of the organised workers, so far as their strength permitted, did support the proposals to limit the ruinous effect of unrestrained capitalist exploitation of labour, and to obtain political rights and representative powers for the whole adult population, nevertheless the prognostications of Bronterre O'Brien were, as will be seen later, most unfortunately fulfilled. The skilled men, that is to say, lost sight of the fact that their interests and those of the unskilled men were one and the same, if they were both to be relieved from the crushing influence of capitalist monopoly. With their extreme anxiety to obtain higher wages, without looking to the final abrogation of the wages system, they grew, in fact, to be supporters of the employers in their domination. One section of the organised wage-earners became in this manner participators in the methods of employment which oppressed the whole class.

Worse than this, the excessive overwork of women, and the introduction of children into the mills found defenders among the very class which suffered from this short-sighted policy, so injurious to the best interests of the entire community. The adult male workers did not understand that the superior docility of the women and children, and their incapacity to revolt even by strikes, helped the employers to squeeze more profit out of the whole wage-earning body, by the competition of members of their own household on a still lower scale of subsistence payment than their own. The total wages coming into their homes at the week-end seemed to be increased by the common effort of the family, where, as an economic fact, the wages of the men by themselves would have been equal to that received by the fathers of families, their wives and children together, had it not been for the employment of these others on a lower standard of life. Working mothers upheld, ruinously, the sweating of their own children as whole-timers, and afterwards as half-timers, in the factories, on the ground that the family benefited by the wages thus earned, and that the work they had gone through themselves ought to be undertaken by their own boys

and girls. Thus, no slight opposition to social improvement came from the working class itself; and the obstacles the Chartists had to encounter in this respect have existed up to the present day. It is not surprising that, with such ignorance to combat, in the early days, it took many long years to make the Factory Acts effective.

All the practical social effects of unrestricted capitalism were, however, explained to the people by the Chartists in plain, easily understood language, none the less correct for being intelligible. Thus they taught that men, women and children, from their lack of property of any kind, were compelled, in order merely to live, to sell the labour power in their bodies as a commodity—a commodity, moreover, which would not keep—to the capitalists, on the lowest standard of subsistence usual in their trade; that the capitalists, landlords, bankers, brokers, merchants, shopkeepers, etc., took, in the shape of rent, interest, profit, commissions, commercial charges, differences of value, all the social labour value that men, women and children produced in the factories, over and above the cost of raw material, wear and tear, etc., and the mere cost of subsistence of the workers paid in wages; that the capitalists, landlords and their hangers-on gained virtually all the advantages of the great improvements in labour-saving machinery, chemistry, superior organisation, cheapness of coal, raw material and food, whereas the workers benefited little, if at all, but often rather suffered, from the introduction of new and improved processes; and that the wage-earners were not sure of receiving even the small remuneration which their low average standard of life called for, owing to commercial crises and other disturbances of trade.

All these facts were familiar to the working-class leaders of the early Chartist times, as also the truth that capitalism could not hold its own under free competition unless a fringe of unemployed labour were ever at hand to keep down the rate of wages, and that there could be no over-population, so long as men were constantly producing by their labour more than was necessary (if work were properly co-ordinated) to enable all to live in comfort and even luxury. These views were more advanced in genuine economics and sociology than any which were widely accepted at that time on the Continent of Europe. They were preached by the Chartists long before Karl Marx

was heard of, and at least twenty years before the Communist Manifesto was published.[1]

Yet, supposing that the time had been ripe in England, as many then believed, for a great social revolution, one important fact stood in the way of both the political and physical force revolutionists. In all the serious upheavals, previous to the nineteenth century, London had taken a leading part. The men of the metropolis were formerly a turbulent folk. Cromwell, at the height of his power, had trouble with the citizens of the metropolis. This was not the case in the days of Chartism. That movement had its centres in the industrial districts of the north of England, where the big factory system had first taken root. London had shared to a relatively small extent in that development. There was agitation, there were meetings, there were small disturbances and ill-organised risings, but London was never really stirred by the propaganda. The Chartists did not underrate the importance of the capital. Efforts were made to rouse the population. But there was never any enthusiasm on the Thames at all comparable to the vigour and determination displayed in Lancashire, Yorkshire, the Midlands, or even Wales. The social programme never gripped the imagination of the populace in London as it did elsewhere; the conception of physical force never appealed to the descendants of the old train-bands: the political demands themselves, though more acceptable to the Londoners, were not combined in their minds with ideas of a thoroughgoing transformation.

This was apparent at the imposing National Convention held by the Chartists in London in 1838, six years after the passing of the Reform Bill. The result of the gathering from which so much was expected was disappointing, and the local riots which occurred were easily suppressed. Nothing more of a serious character was attempted in the capital until ten years later, when the failure of the Great Demonstration of 10th April 1848, on Kennington Common, practically brought the whole movement to an end. This demonstration, however, caused great alarm. The Duke of Wellington concentrated a well-equipped army in London, prepared for all emergencies, and special

[1] The immense service rendered by Marx was, that he gave a scientific basis to all this popular revolt; and enabled the wage-earners to meet the bourgeois political economists on their own chosen ground.

constables were enrolled in addition in very large numbers. But the outcome of it all was given in answer to an inquiry of a shopkeeper in the neighbourhood as to the cause of the interruption to the traffic in Fetter Lane: "It is only the Revolution going down Fleet Street." It was impossible to rouse the centre of the Empire to any great extent; and this made failure certain, though there were few who recognised it at the time.

In 1842 the physical force section of the Chartists may be said to have gone under; for the Kennington Common Demonstration in 1848 was, in reality, no more than a political assembly. At the same time the agitation for the Repeal of the Corn Laws which had been going on steadily took a very active shape. This measure was ardently advocated by the capitalists as the economic cure for all social ills. The Chartists, though favourable to Free Trade in theory, opposed Repeal most vigorously, unless it was accompanied by nationalisation of the land. They argued that the cheapening of the price of the necessaries of life which might follow upon Repeal would not in the least affect the status of the wage-earners in their relations with the capitalist class. Bread might cost less; if this was so, wages, under the conditions then prevailing, would fall relatively to that extent. No permanent social improvement would result for the working class. The wage-earners would be at the mercy of the employers as before, and in the long run the latter alone would gain.

Therefore the Chartists and their followers went so far in their opposition as to attend, interrupt, and break up Free Trade meetings wherever possible. They considered the Repeal of the Corn Laws not only as no remedy for the miserable condition of the workers already described, but as not even a palliative of the existing state of things. But there was a very much stronger reason for the vehement opposition offered to the capitalist Free Trade agitation which really determined their hostile attitude. The leading orators, agitators and writers of the Free Trade movement numbered in their ranks the most bitter opponents of any laws which might restrict the overwork of women, do away with the wholesale sweating of children, or limit the general hours of labour in the factories. Fox, Bright, and Cobden were all on the side of *laissez-faire* and Free Trade in sweated labour, as well as in imported corn.

Moreover, the same men and their associates were violent enemies of all combinations among the workers. Trade Unions might be an aristocracy of labour, as Bronterre O'Brien and other Chartists maintained, but they were organisations directed against the unlimited power of employers to decree and maintain low rates of wages for the skilled workers. It was upon this ground that the capitalist orators of Free Trade attacked them. Naturally this was a strong cause of offence to men who were striving for the uplifting of the whole people. In short, the Chartist leaders regarded the agitation for the Repeal of the Corn Laws by itself as no better than a red herring drawn by the employers across the trail of nationalisation and socialisation which should lead the workers to economic and social freedom. Further, the orators of Free Trade exaggerated most preposterously the glorious changes that would come over the condition of the people if their programme were carried out. It is very sad, and grimly ludicrous, to look back to-day at the predictions of the Free Traders as to the halcyon conditions which would prevail for the working people and their families if only the Corn Laws were repealed. Undoubtedly these Laws did benefit the landlords, and did raise the price of bread. But W. H. Fox, the finest orator of them all, who was specially eloquent on this reform, made out that squalor would be unknown, slums would disappear, unemployment would cease to be, all wages would rise, poor-houses —bastilles, the people called them—would fall into decay like the feudal castles of the old nobility. A glorious prospect indeed. The Chartists protested: nationalisation of land first, Free Trade afterwards. But the capitalists won the day. Nationalisation of any description fell into abeyance from 1846 onwards.

Seventy years of experience of Free Trade under capitalism has proved to the present generation of workers that the Chartists were quite right in their predictions, the capitalist orator quite wrong.

The attempt of the Chartists to rouse anew the people of England when national revolt, political overthrow and Socialist agitation were going on all over the Continent, failed. From 1848, in spite of all spasmodic efforts, Chartism gradually died down. Its active leaders were never able to secure the political positions to which their great abilities and splendid efforts on

behalf of the people entitled them. They were ahead of their time. Even their names, as said, are mostly forgotten. But when, in days to come, the real history of the English people in the nineteenth century is written from the point of view of the people themselves, none will be more honoured than they. For the Chartists were the leaders of the first organised political, forcible and class-conscious revolt against capitalism, profiteering and wage slavery, as a recognised and definite historic development, which grew up in the eighteenth century and has passed from its zenith to its decline within our own day.

## CHAPTER XXIX

## THE PERIOD OF APATHY

After the decay of the Chartist Movement in 1848 a blight fell upon the whole working class of Great Britain. They lost their vigorous revolutionary impulse entirely. Prayer meetings and Mechanics' Institutes gave expression to their highest aspirations. They accepted penal servitude for life as the portion of them and theirs for ever; limited by philanthropic enactments, it is true, as the slaves of old time were protected by law from the more outrageous brutality of their masters under Hadrian and the Antonines. Bemused and benighted by the fallacies of profiteering economics, and the devil-take-the-hindmost individualism of the competitive capitalism which dominated their fortunes, the wealth producers of our island actually indoctrinated themselves with the belief that their duty in life was to strive for the enrichment of their employers, since in this way alone could they benefit themselves and their fellows; unless, indeed, by extraordinary self-denial and miraculous thrift, they might rise out of the ruck of wage-earners and become employers of their less parsimonious and self-denying co-workers in their turn. Nothing could be more depressing.

It was an Egyptian darkness of the intelligence which could be felt. I have spoken and written of that deplorable generation as the period of apathy. It was worse, it was a period of servility and of systematic corruption of the working-class mind through the poisoning of the sources of information by the entire Press. I first saw it all very close when I, a Londoner by birth, was reading as a lad with the vicar of St Thomas', Stockport, and went about the neighbourhood playing cricket in the eleven of Manchester (Old Trafford) Club. I did not, of course, fully appreciate the causes or the effects of the horrors around me. But Stockport itself was at that time a frightful den, and other cities of Lancashire were like unto it. As I grew up, therefore, all these dreadful places, in which the fortunes of the cotton lords were piled up out of the misery of the ill-housed, ill-fed,

ill-clothed, ill-tended men, women and children, came back upon me and I recognised as I visited the same towns again in later years that large portions of the people are little better off to-day than they were then. How human beings could continue to exist in such surroundings, without rising in open revolt against those who kept them there, was a marvel.

Not until long afterwards did I apprehend that these conditions themselves tend to maintain the masses in subjection, by sheer ignorance and physical depression, until the whole social system is tottering to its fall. This was apparent in the political field when Ernest Jones stood at this same time (1858) for Manchester, the leading city of the whole development, and was well beaten by the two plutocrats, Milner Gibson and John Bright. So hopeless was the entire outlook for the wage-earners that more than forty years later one of the ablest organisers the workers of England ever had explained to me that, though he saw as clearly as I did the monstrous wrongs inflicted by capitalism upon the people, he could not have carried his own cotton operatives with him had he openly proclaimed the opinions which he held. Such was the statement made to me by the late James Maudslay at the great International Trades Union and Socialist Congress held in the Queen's Hall, London, in 1896. Yet the dry bones of individualism and "self-help" had then been stirred for sixteen years.

Notwithstanding also the ground which the Trade Unions were then gaining, the members whom they returned to Parliament so little understood the inevitable antagonism between the wage-earners they represented and the landlords and employers who constituted the House of Commons, that they actually formed a section of the Capitalist-Liberal party, and could always be relied upon to vote with that party, save and except when questions of Irish peasants, not English factory hands, were concerned. Worse than this, the workers as a whole preferred to be represented by rich men—by the very capitalists, that is to say, who had grown up in their own neighbourhood and had made great wealth out of the labour of the voters who returned these plutocrats to Parliament. The mere fact of being a millionaire was a high recommendation to an industrial constituency. He could afford to find plenty of funds for all sorts of election expenses and to

subscribe largely to the local charities. A working man who stood stoutly for the real interests of the workers, and appealed to them as a class to return him to champion their rights, independently of both the capitalist factions, had no chance at all in those days. Not even a candidate pledged to the eight-hour day, or to the abolition of half-time for young children in the factories could get a hearing.

Thus all the fine, self-sacrificing work of the Chartists had but ploughed up barren soil, their teaching had fallen by the wayside. Only here and there was to be found an enthusiast who waited patiently for the revival of the old spirit, and lived, and in too many cases, died, without being able to detect even the slightest prospect of a real change.

During the entire half-century, from 1848 to 1900, slums were spreading in all the great cities, long periods of unemployment for huge numbers of the people frequently recurred, education for the masses was still deplorably bad, half-time child labour remained the rule in Lancashire, emigration was fervently preached as a remedy for "over-population," land was going steadily out of cultivation, while agricultural labourers were miserably underpaid, and existence, not to say decent maintenance, for the deserving poor remained as uncertain as ever. It was, in fact, in the very midst of these halcyon days for the rich employers and their hangers-on that a philanthropic shipowner proved, by elaborate statistics, that one-third of the working population received weekly wages insufficient, even in those days of cheap food and cheap clothing and cheap fuel all round, to keep them above the semi-starvation level.

All this is indisputable, and has been often commented upon. If the extreme anarchists had been right when they declared that the intolerable contrast between excessive wealth and grinding poverty *must* bring about upheaval and social revolution, then Great Britain, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, would have been in one continuous whirlpool of insurrection. Nothing of the kind. The utmost perturbation manifested was in the shape of a succession of agitations on behalf of the unemployed, which led to little improvement in their condition, and were forgotten by the out-of-work men themselves, as soon as bettering trade reabsorbed them into the ranks of ill-paid wagedom. During the whole of this period of apathy, however, not only had

the capitalists command over all the inventions and discoveries previously made and adapted to the increased production of social wealth, but the astounding expansion of man's power over nature, which began in the eighteenth century, progressed with a rapidity quite unprecedented in the history of the human race.

There was a greater transformation in all important departments of human knowledge and human appliances for wealth production and distribution than had been effected in thousands of years before. It requires almost as vigorous an effort of the imagination to live back into the first half of the eighteenth century in Great Britain and enter into the forms of life which then prevailed, even among the most luxurious class, compared with the habits, customs and manners of the same class to-day, as to picture the actual existence of a Japanese feudal Daimio of old time, or the general life of the Egyptian nobles who gathered round a Pharaoh. To appreciate the difference we have to strip off, not only the vast motive powers of steam and electricity and oil used for accelerating machinery, as well as the stupendous improvements of every sort in machinery itself, but most of the small conveniences of everyday domestic life and the details of daily use, like the telegraph, telephone, daily post, etc. Transport and communication have been entirely revolutionised. Even the wage-earners themselves are able to transfer their labour from one country to another for seasonal work, like the Italians, for example, voyaging thousands of miles to North and South America and returning home at short intervals. The world market and the world at large have replaced, in mercantile calculations, all the old local considerations of traffic which dominated little more than a century ago. The globe which, not much earlier than the beginning of the nineteenth century, would have had the bigness in our mental vision of Jonah's gourd, say, now assumes the size of a tangerine orange.

Throughout the whole of the commencement of these amazing changes Great Britain led the entire development. All the immense improvements went into the hands of her capitalists —without any reference to the wage-earners working below. Their diseases even—engendered by town life, the factory system, and the physical and mental deterioration entailed—

passed almost wholly disregarded by the nation at large, so completely had the idea that the health and strength of the people is the greatest national asset faded out of the minds of the class which controlled the national policy solely for its own pecuniary advantage. Cato's opinion about the uselessness of sick and worn-out slaves became the general basis of the ethic of capitalist wagedom.

Yet there was no revolt whatever of the wage-earners themselves against this sinister morality. Such suggestions as were put forward in the interests of common humanity came, not from the working class, but from members of the bourgeoisie themselves. Even the Trade Unions, though growing in numbers, influence and political power, paid little or no attention to the well-being of the lower grades of labour, which were unorganised, and considered higher wages for themselves the only matter worthy of serious attention. Thus, in the leading capitalist country, there was no conscious revolutionary movement nor any general idea—such as prevailed among the Chartists—of taking possession of the land, the means of communication, the factories and the shipping of the nation for the advantage of the whole people, even among skilled and organised artisans, still less, therefore, among unskilled and casual labourers, for more than fifty years. The conception of an economic and social class war had disappeared from the sphere of workshop discussion as well as from the area of "practical politics." So lately as 1888 a foreign workman, long resident in England, who persisted in moving for an eight-hour law at successive Trade Union Congresses, was regarded by his English fellow-toilers as a well-meaning but wholly unpractical fanatic. Years passed, and unceasing propaganda had been carried on throughout Great Britain, before any such reduction became in reality a question of the day.

Needless to say, therefore, that the desperate struggle of the Commune of Paris, already dealt with, failed to rouse any active sympathy on the English side of the Channel. A small knot of old Chartists, combined with a very few Trade Unionists who had been influenced by the teachings of International Socialists, issued a Manifesto, and called a meeting in Hyde Park, in support of the Parisian workers against M. Thiers and the reactionary army of the bourgeoisie. But this effort to rouse British workers

fell flat. No aid was forthcoming from British Trade Unionists either before or after the fall of the Commune. It was even left to the band of highly educated Positivists, belonging to the well-to-do class, who assuredly had no sympathy with Socialism as an economic or social policy, to obtain some sort of consideration and employment for the refugees who reached London after the terrible butcheries at Satory. Possessed of no ideal or high aspiration for the future of their class themselves; having, as already said, no end in life but to improve somewhat the wage-slave system, which condemned them to perpetual labour for the benefit of others, the toilers of Great Britain could not in the least comprehend, far less admire or sympathise with, such a hopeless attempt against hopeless odds to gain an impossible victory for the sake of "human solidarity." It was not, however, the certainty of failure, as matters then stood, and the foolishness of risking many thousands of human lives on a ruinous venture, that left them careless of the result and indifferent, or nearly so, to the fate of the defeated, but sheer incapacity, as a class, to enter into the motives of the men and women who deliberately sacrificed themselves in such a struggle.

Here is another most convincing proof of the truth that the stage of economic development by no means invariably reflects itself in the thoughts and actions of human beings engaged in the forms of production then dominant. England and London were then economically far in advance of France and Paris. England herself, at a previous period, when her industrial forms had not attained anything approaching to the level of those of 1871, showed through her working class, a clearer appreciation of the real meaning and tendency of capitalist production for profit and wagedom than France; yet the French workers were at this time ahead of their English brethren in appreciating the desperate social conditions inevitable for the toilers of all nations so long as capitalism should endure. These contrasts are inexplicable, unless we take account of other than purely material influences in their crude sense. Nor does this apply to England and France alone. Germany, which, up to the early eighties of the last century, was certainly behind England in economic growth, had a far more active and better organised working-class movement in spite of this. So had Belgium, Denmark and Finland, which likewise were less economically advanced.

Thus we have the fact that the workers of Great Britain, who led Europe in organised proletarian resistance to capitalism during the first half of the nineteenth century, actually fell behind in the latter half, as capitalism gained strength, and were passed, in the display of working-class vigour and intelligence, by populations at that time on a lower economic level. To argue that this was due to inferior education is only to enhance the value of that psychological factor on the one side; while, on the other, none can doubt that the English wage-earners, who were such stalwart opponents of capitalism and all its works in the Chartist days, had still less education to boast of than their successors, from 1848 onwards. Obviously, such examples show the danger of laying down any hard and fast line as to the direct influence of forms of production upon revolutionary movements. Other elements must be taken into account. This has already been seen over a wide area; here it manifests itself within a much narrower sphere. That, however, taking civilisation as a whole, the expansion of capitalism is increasingly accompanied by the revolt of the wage-earners, and the development of Socialism, even a superficial survey is sufficient to disclose.

From the end of the great twenty years' war against Napoleon in 1815, therefore, no Socialism in any shape took root in Great Britain except for the short time when the Chartists were agitating. And English Trade Unionists, after 1848, were content to act in economic and social matters as if the wage-earning system doomed them to permanent subjection. They divorced their activities entirely from politics. English Trade Unionists, as Trade Unionists, had, therefore, no political influence, and were regarded by foreign Socialists as little better than the "yellow" unions of the Continent, set on foot by Catholics and other reactionary elements. England, in fact, was the principal conservative element; and there seemed little prospect, even forty years ago, that the Chartist view of the inevitable class antagonism and class war between the wage-earners and the capitalist employers, with its only possible solution in the nationalisation and socialisation of all the great means of producing and distributing wealth, would again make way in Great Britain. Socialism had come to be regarded as a foreign importation solely, and Communism, which, of course, connotes

precisely the same thing, was considered quite unfit for staid and sober English workers. This, in spite of the fact that in 1864 the International Working Men's Association was founded in London mainly by and with the enthusiastic support of English Trade Unionists, and an English Positivist, Professor E. S. Beesley, took the chair at its first public meeting. The association, after a struggle with Mazzini and his friends, fell under the influence of Marx and Engels, then both resident in London, whose remarkable Communist Manifesto of 1847 has already been referred to.

Both these men, admirable as they were in their exposition and analysis of economic history and sociological tendencies, were not only very bad judges of character, but they were—especially Engels—exceedingly dictatorial and much addicted to intrigue. It is difficult to imagine people less qualified to inspire ordinary English workers with their ideas. As a consequence, both before and after the publication of the first volumes of Marx's colossal work, *Das Kapital*, in 1867, not translated into English as a whole until many years later, this association, generally called the "First International," made very little way in Great Britain. English influence on the International, in fact, became a negligible quantity. The Trade Unionists gradually withdrew. Admiring Marx and his great abilities, they were unable to accept his theories, which were the doctrines of the Chartists put in a logical form, and provided with a scientific basis—as a trustworthy guide in practical life. The events of 1871 confirmed them in this opinion.

Not until 1880-1881 was an organised effort begun to revive among the people of Great Britain their early opposition to the tyranny of capital. This movement was cast in a shape suited to the new period and designed to connect a genuine English Socialist party, based upon scientific economics and sociology, with English political traditions. The pioneers of this party, which held its first conference on 8th June 1881, were the members of the Democratic—soon afterwards known as the Social-Democratic—Federation. It was an uphill task. Beginning at the end of 1880, with the announcement of a very advanced political programme, advantage was taken of the form thus adopted to spread the ideas of Socialism among the Radical clubs of London. But this did not last long. A book distri-

buted at the Conference showed clearly what was the real object in view, and thereupon most of the Radicals and a few nationalisers of rent were alarmed and left. Yet, from this time may be dated the commencement of the agitation for the collectivisation and communisation of property in Great Britain, an agitation which the establishment of *Justice* in January, 1884, greatly helped. That journal has been published weekly now for over thirty-six years without a single break. It has never ceased to champion the cause of Social Democracy, and no contributor has ever received payment for his contributions—a record quite unparalleled in the annals of journalism in any country.

The Fabian Society, the Socialist League and, eleven years later, the Independent Labour Party followed in the wake of the Social-Democratic Federation. But the first of these organisations refused to admit that a class war exists between wage-earners and the bourgeoisie, and devoted itself chiefly to permeating the middle class with collectivist notions; the second eschewed political action altogether; and the third, formed in order to constitute a moderate half-way house for the entertainment of weak brethren, has developed into an organisation which, by its strong anti-nationalism, has lately done much to retard the spread of Socialism of any shade among the mass of Englishmen and Englishwomen.

It is worth notice, as showing the difficulties which had to be overcome in the propaganda of clear-cut Social Democracy, that not only were the pioneers and their opinions by no means welcome, at first, even among the mass of advanced working men, but, though they were endeavouring to spread Marxian economics and sociology, they were bitterly denounced, on the continent of Europe and in America, by the strict advocates of Marxist theories themselves, including Marx and his friends.

The latter forgot, in their zeal for their own special views that even the most accurate historic and economic surveys of general development must be adapted to the social conditions and traditions of various nations, as well as to the stage of economic growth which each nation has attained. This is perhaps more true of England than any other country, seeing that the English have had a century-long development of their own, unlike that in Continental nations; that religious prejudices have much greater influence in England than else-

where; that the people are divorced from the soil, constituting a genuine proletariat; that they are essentially political in their methods, to an extent which foreigners are rarely able to understand or appreciate. They are also, as already observed, singularly deficient in idealism, and frequently destitute of foresight where their own dearest interests are concerned. Add to all this that their education is exceptionally deficient, and that the numbers and influence of the purely parasitical classes and their hangers-on are greater in England than anywhere else in the world, and it is easy to understand that, however noble and inspiring a material creed of social human development may be, appeals to reason are less effective in Great Britain than among any other highly civilised people of the West.

## CHAPTER XXX

## TOWARDS A CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH

WHAT are the principles which, expounded under these conditions in this island for just upon forty years, are at last making way—the principles which form the foundation of a peaceful social revolution? It is most necessary that at this juncture, and probably for a few years to come, these principles, economic and social, should be clearly set forth; since it is certain that attempts to realise them in practice will be met by reactionary resistance, or by positive treachery and violence on the part of the possessing classes. Also, the workers will make endeavours to attain their end by virtually anarchistic methods; for they realise that their position under existing conditions must be permanently precarious, no matter how far they may succeed in raising their wages. (In fact we can see both these tendencies at work at the present time. On the one hand, the possessing classes are now refusing to accept the very idea of ownership and management by the State, because their own bureaucratic control of railways, factories, mines, shipping, has been so wasteful and disastrous during the war; on the other hand, the workers are daily demanding that genuine collective agency on behalf of the community should be begun at once, and are declaring with obvious justice that they, as a class, are wholly devoid of responsibility for the blunders of their employers and their nominees.) Here, then, are the principles and proposals which have been advocated by Social Democrats in this country since 1880 as a definite social policy. All the collectivists, now active in national and local affairs, owe what knowledge of political economy and social progress they possess to the pioneers of those early days.

Through the long growth of society down the ages there have always been, since the establishment of private property, one or more possessing classes, who own everything and who constitute themselves the dominating minority of the society in each

period. Below them are the dominated majority who own little or nothing.

The struggles between sections of the master classes, and the revolts of the disinherited class against their oppressors constitute the record of the progress of civilised mankind.

Slavery, direct chattel slavery, lasted among the more advanced peoples for tens of thousands of years. Here the worker, as well as all he produced by his labour, belonged to the man who owned both the worker, his family, the land and the tools in country and town.

Feudalism, with its attendant serfdom and villeinage, endured in Western Europe for less than a thousand years. Here in most cases it may be said that the feudal chief owned the worker and his family, but not always the land, or even the tools. "We are the lord's, but the land is ours," was a common saying of the workers on the soil.

Under capitalism, with its wage slavery, the worker and his family are nominally free; but, as we have seen, the land, the tools and all the product of his labour belong to the employing class. The workers are at liberty to change their individual masters, if they can, that is all.

There is a continuous class war between wage slaves and the capitalist class, with its parasites.

So long as wages are paid by one class to another class, so long will men and women remain slaves to the employing class.

Wage slaves have ceased to be at the mercy of individual employers, but they cannot emancipate themselves from slavery to the employing class, until they themselves cease to compete with one another for wages.

"Free and Independent Workers" sell their labour power, which is the only commodity they possess, to the capitalists who own or control all the means of producing wealth, including the tools, raw material, land and money.

Under the great machine methods of production the workers are controlled by their tools, instead of being in control of them.

Under the capitalist system of production for exchange the producers themselves have no control over their own products.

Commodities, social goods, are produced, not directly for social purposes, but indirectly, in order to create a profit for the capitalists.

If capitalists are unable for any reason to produce goods profitably, the wage-earners cease to be employed, though there may be a vast quantity of useful goods glutting the warehouses on the one hand, and millions of people who are anxious to have them on the other.

Rent, profit and interest are all provided by the workers.

They are, all three, the component parts of the labour value embodied in saleable commodities by the labour power of the workers, over and above the actual wages paid to the toiler, and the cost of raw materials, incidental materials, etc., needed by the capitalist for the conduct of his business.

The wages paid by the employers to their hands represent the customary standard of life of the special grade of skilled or unskilled workers employed.

These wages are, on the average, returned in saleable values to the capitalist in a portion of the working day, or week, for which the worker has sold his labour power to the capitalist.

The goods produced during the rest of the time the wage-earner works for the capitalist are the result of this extra and unpaid labour, furnished by the toiler to the capitalist. It is the modern industrial expression of the *corvée*, enforced, not by the whip, but by pecuniary necessity and individual hunger. This is the surplus value, out of which all the classes who do not directly produce are paid their share: the majority as parasites, the minority as professional persons.

Production for profit and exchange by wage labour assumes the existence, from historic causes, of large numbers of people who are divorced from the land and possess no property of their own.

The only way to solve the growing antagonism between the two great classes of modern society is, by substituting co-operation for competition, in all branches of production and distribution.

This involves a social revolution, peaceful or forcible.

Competition proved itself to be anarchical in its essence by the series of financial crises which occurred in the nineteenth century; while at the same time large trade combinations were growing up in every branch of commerce and finance.

When companies obtained command of the railways as competitive enterprises, they soon learned that competition was a

dangerous form of waste. They established non-competitive rates of transport, and this principle has been followed in an increasing ratio in every branch of business.

Competition has, while endeavouring to reduce false expenses by combination, steadily advanced towards the period when it will find its logical term in monopoly. Capitalism is thus digging its own grave, and preparing the way for the expropriation of its entire system by the community.

Money disguises the whole process of the robbery of labour, as well as the truth about the creation of surplus value at home, and the legal conveyance of booty (tributes, payments without commercial return, etc.) from abroad.

Gold, used for many many centuries as a means of facilitating exchange between societies on a much less advanced social level than our own, fulfils now, in money, paper and credit, functions which obscure the economic and social facts underlying financial transactions; and, in some cases, gold acts as a hindrance to continuous production.

Thus the necessity which exists for the capitalist to convert his commodities into money, before he can carry on his fresh operations, not infrequently prevents him from proceeding with his business at all, or only on a very restricted scale.

Wage-earners are thus thrown out of employment, not because they are clamouring for impossible wages, still less because they are unwilling to work, but because the employing class itself cannot produce at a loss, and therefore shuts down its factories or only runs them on short time.

Wages paid in money seem to workers to come to them from above, instead of being only the value of a portion of the goods they themselves produce, paid to them in the form of money. They owe this blunder to their own condition of servitude.

Workers have advanced their labour power to the capitalist before they are paid their wages for its use.

Capitalists, *as a class*, run no risks whatever; the unfortunate in the competitive struggle for gain are simply wiped out by their competitors, who benefit by their downfall.

Shareholders in capitalist companies rarely or never render any service to the company, or the community, as shareholders. In the vast majority of cases they have never visited the enterprises from which they draw their dividends.

In many directions existing capitalism in its developed shape holds back the adoption of great improvements and inventions, since these tend to displace, and render valueless, capital on a large scale already invested in the undertakings which should be improved.

The power of man over nature is so great in every branch of human industry, including agriculture, that if all the mechanical appliances, chemical substances, motive forces and general knowledge at the disposal of mankind in the civilisation of to-day were applied co-operatively to the supply of useful goods and social luxuries, with ample margin for collective exchange, "wealth might easily be made as plentiful as water"—in Robert Owen's admirably true phrase.

Light, enjoyable labour by all members of the community would thus produce plenty for all, and wages and prices would disappear.

The market for commodities being now as wide as the world, the whole population of the globe is drawn into the whirl of capitalist production for profit.

Hence some understanding between the wage-earners of various countries, even at widely different stages of social evolution, is most desirable.

In every case, however, the social problems in separate nations must be solved in accordance with the stage of development which each country has reached, and the historic traditions which it has inherited.

It is impossible to force higher economic forms upon a nation in a lower stage of development.

Thorough education and organisation of the wage-slave class to be emancipated is essential, before a social transformation can be achieved from private to collective production, and then to communal ownership and control, even when the economic forms are fully ready for such transformation.

Certain assumptions are essential to a peaceful and successful social revolution:

1. The economic and social development must have reached such a level that this social revolution is, sooner or later, inevitable.

2. Members of the community, and more especially the workers, must be intellectually able to appreciate the social and

economic conditions in which their society moves and has its being.

3. If force is to be used by the workers, or if they follow a policy which must lead to force being used against them by the possessing minority, then, in order to escape reaction and its consequences, they must decide on a thoroughly sound programme beforehand, and make it universally known.

4. Where freedom of speech, freedom of combination, together with political freedom and voting power, have been secured, the use of the political weapon in the first instance is by far the best course, and in the long run the most effective. This arises from several reasons: (*a*) The wage-earners who, being too ignorant of the real interests of their class or insufficiently organised, will not go to the ballot-box to vote for their champions, certainly will never go to the barricades to fight for them effectively; (*b*) If they win on the political field they are in a very much stronger position to enter upon actual civil war, and are ready to take over the machinery of government for the benefit of the whole community; (*c*) Direct action, by means of successive strikes or a general strike of all the workers, would only disorganise the whole of the existing machinery of production and distribution which they desire to secure for themselves and the whole community. Even when the workers have succeeded in paralysing industry, they must co-ordinate the anarchy and chaos by political means so created through a National Assembly.

5. Also, in any organised effort outside the political arena, the growing ill-feeling of all not immediately concerned in the strike when starvation set in, might lead to a military dictatorship of some duration, if only to secure renewed peace and daily sustenance for the majority.

In any reorganisation of society upon the lines of co-operation, constituted by or in the interest of the producing class for the advantage of the community, it is imperative to begin with the great social powers which have already reached the form of companies, whether for production or distribution. Great anonymous agencies of this kind are at once ready for socialisation. They can be as easily and better worked co-operatively, with experts employed by the whole people, having common interests in their perfect functioning, than by the shareholders

or by the capitalist State bureaucracy, whose corruption and inefficiency are notorious.

Thus, the beginning of the solution of class antagonism, and the adaptation of capitalism and wage slavery to Socialist or Communist production and distribution would be with the railways, which in Great Britain are run entirely against the interest of the people, and constitute a great scheme of protection in favour of the foreigner. These ought never to have been allowed to go into private hands at all, any more than high-roads, bridges, water supply or any other public service. Next, with the mines, which provide the only great and permanent source of power supply in the country; thirdly, with the great shipping industry; fourthly, with factories that have nearly attained the level of national and international trusts; fifthly, with the most important agencies of distribution, such as the great stores which have grown up all over Britain—stores which, associated with the still greater and far more economically important co-operative stores (divorced from their "divi"), would slowly lead the way to the socialisation of the methods of distribution. This would lead to co-operative methods of production, while capitalism still continued its waning domination above.

Lastly would come the land, the most difficult problem of all on the road to the new period and the Co-operative Commonwealth, National and International. For, hard as socialisation of land production is in other countries, in this island it is hardest of all. Elsewhere, the bulk of the people are still cultivators, are accustomed to the hardships connected with handling the soil, mostly own their own land, which they dig and plough and watch and tend with unremitting assiduity—not in the company form, and therefore unripe for socialisation, but capable of being brought within the co-operative circle by creameries, elevators, cold-storage buildings and the like. Here, however, there are no peasantry, no *métayers*, no independent producers. We have only landowners, capitalist farmers, agricultural labourers, mere proletarians of the soil (just as the artisans and casual labourers are proletarians of the cities), and, all taken together, constituting only a small minority of the entire population. Nationalisation and socialisation of the land is indispensable, inevitable, sooner or later; for our

nation cannot continue to draw half its entire sustenance and six-sevenths of all its bread from foreign countries, some of them thousands of miles distant from its shores. Will circumstances so order things that we shall be driven, regardless of economic advisability, to attempt to solve this last problem first?

How to popularise these ideas when, owing to their lack of education, it is so desperately difficult to induce the workers, brought up through three generations of capitalism, and practically unable to reason from the wage slavery of production for other men's profit to production for their own and other people's use? How to persuade them that only by getting rid of wages, high or low, altogether could they rid themselves and their children of never-ending anxiety, by obtaining through common labour, plenty, enjoyment and leisure for all? The truth had to be put before them at first in plain language, with commonplace illustrations drawn from the facts of their daily life. History, economic theory, Socialist proposals, were introduced afterwards. It was a procession upwards, from the orange-box at the dock gates or factory lane, to the lecture-room and the public hall.

To make the suggestion, even, of their own emancipation from degrading toil to unknown freedom acceptable, stepping-stones to the new period, or palliatives of existing conditions, were bound to be introduced. These were the eight-hour day, free education, gratuitous feeding of children in the elementary schools, work for all, overwork for none, organisation of unemployed labour on useful production, control of municipalities and municipal services, the sweeping away of miserable charity which curses him who gives and him who takes.

Such were the facts and theories, such the minor proposals put before the workers, of Great Britain, with unflagging zeal and unwearying fanaticism, by the pioneers of the Social Democratic Federation for thirty-three full years. Others were working in the same direction in their own way. Their intention was to prepare the ground for a peaceful and beneficial revolution, such as economic evolution rendered certain eventually, by education of the workers in the first place, and of the intellectual portion of the well-to-do class in the second. For propaganda was by no means confined to the street corners or the public halls in the

metropolis and the great industrial centres. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge themselves were approached, not to say attacked, in the eighties. Socialistic groups were formed later; and, so far as a policy of permeation of the middle class could be successful in weakening the resistance of the possible enemy, the Fabian Society did its work well in that respect. A reasonable collectivism of a bureaucratic type, though based on political democracy, came gradually to be regarded as quite a possible transition stage by the more intelligent of the professional and literary men.

When the great Trade Unions, combining together, took part in and defrayed the expenses of the imposing International Socialist Congress held at the Queen's Hall in London, in 1896, it really looked like an important advance towards bringing the aristocracy of labour to make common cause with Social Democrats in Great Britain, in a strenuous effort to build up a genuine Socialist party, which would enter into relations with similar working-class parties on the continent of Europe and elsewhere. But the English move slowly. Not until nearly twenty years later did the Trade Unions and their members begin to look upon domestic and foreign working-class industrial interests from the Socialist point of view. Trade Unionists they were, and Trade Unionists they would remain: wages, higher wages, they could understand; shorter hours at the same wages seemed advantageous—anything beyond this they still failed to comprehend. But from this narrow basis, and by way of pious resolutions in favour of land nationalisation and secular education, etc., the Trade Unions gathered numbers and influence, until by degrees a demand arose for political action, and the Labour Party was formed, to give expression to this great change of opinion.

It was undoubtedly a very great change of opinion, and one which Social Democrats had always striven to bring about. After some years of organisation and agitation, always conducted with a strange sort of friendly deference to the capitalist Liberal party, a relatively small number of genuine Labour men were returned to the House of Commons, at the General Election of 1906. But it was clear how little the real position in regard to class antagonism was even then understood, seeing that the majority of the Labour members were elected by bargaining with the Liberal organisations for votes, and the chairman of the

party himself obtained three-fourths of his votes, as a winning Labour candidate, from that source. Nevertheless, this election was generally regarded as a forward move for the political Socialists; and at the celebration of the victory of the Labour members at a great meeting in London, the hall was decorated all over with Socialist flags and mottoes.

Unfortunately, the policy of trimming and moderation which had been adopted in the constituencies was followed in Parliament. It would have been impossible, with only thirty members, to have carried Socialist measures. But at least the foundation of an independent nucleus for future purposes might have been laid. This, however, was not done. Only on matters of direct Trade Union interest, in which the ordinary legal proceedings of Trade Unions had been interfered with by hostile class judgments in the courts, or on measures of a purely philanthropic character of no real economic significance, such as the small and very limited Old Age Pensions Bill, did the Labour Party show any vigour, and then still in hearty co-operation with the Liberals who, on all important social issues, were their most dangerous, because most insidious, enemies. It is this miserable addiction to compromise, which surrenders all principles and looks only to petty immediate gains of no real value, that has been the curse of the English working class for many a long year.

This was accompanied, until quite lately, with a marked susceptibility to the social influence of the manners and tone of the highly educated class, together with a singular deference to those "forms of the House" which have been specially instituted and are maintained for the benefit of well-to-do representatives. To show how completely the workers are in the toils of the old traditions and old prejudices of the classes over against them, it is enough to cite the fact that the Game Laws, inherited from William the Conqueror and William Rufus, still remain on the Statute Book, though it is notorious that they are not only monstrous in themselves, but by encouraging non-cultivation of land and by damaging crops, are economically most injurious. Yet even now, in the year 1920, no attempt has been made in the House of Commons to obtain their abrogation by Act of Parliament! Members of the Labour Party who have hesitated to attack a flagrant social abuse, which has been denounced even by Radicals for years,

obviously have no abiding sense of their own duties and responsibilities.

The same statements and criticisms apply to the reinforced Labour Party, which returned more than forty members at the elections of 1910. Superficially, they were committed to nationalisation in more than one direction, but their fatal connection with Liberalism still hampered anything approaching to independent Socialist action. At the same time the vehement opposition of the majority of the whole party, as represented in the House of Commons, to any reasonable preparations for resistance to the manifestly aggressive policy of the German Government, weakened their influence throughout the country. Not only so, but the obvious pro-Germanism of several of the leaders reduced almost to nothing the power of the party to stop hostilities, by convincing German statesmen that, no matter what military steps Germany took, the Liberals would not dare to declare war, and that, even if they did, they would be swept out of office by an indignant nation of traders and pacifists.

It was a desperate blunder on the part of Germany, but a scarcely less fatal mistake on the part of Labourists. For they lost the opportunity of bargaining with the Government for the support of the workers, when the war began, in return for far-reaching social changes; and they were swept along, with the tide of general national feeling, first into the great rush of volunteering and then into conscription, to meet the terrific drain of men necessary for a world war. All that thirty-three years of assiduous Socialist propaganda had been able to effect in our strangely stolid England had been to make ready for a flabby Labour Party, which could not even take advantage of such a magnificent chance as came their way in August, 1914. Once more it seemed as if, ripe though the economic conditions for collective and Socialist co-ordination were, the ignorance of the wage-earners themselves was impervious to any social enlightenment. A Socialist atmosphere had been created above and below, but no clear thought, or definite action, had been brought to bear on the problems of the time.

At this date, August, 1914, when Great Britain had been first the most important, and then, always in a relatively descending scale, one of the three leading industrial powers of the world, the social conditions were abominably bad, so bad that it again

seemed marvellous that no organised effort, either political and peaceful, or forcible and anarchic, had been made to overthrow them. For with London the centre of the financial world, with England's supremacy in shipping still maintained, with the wealth derived from India pouring into her lap, and the productions of her colonies largely at her command, this was in brief the social condition of the population :

1. England had a much larger number of parasites in proportion to her population than any other country in the world.
2. England had a greater area of wretched insanitary slums in proportion to her population than any civilised country in the world.
3. England had a larger acreage of good tillable land uncultivated in proportion to the population to be fed than any other civilised country in the world.
4. England paid a smaller remuneration to her working population in proportion to her total wealth than any country in the world.
5. England imported, from inferior soils thousands of miles away, six-sevenths of the wheat necessary to supply her with bread.

Why, then, was it worth the while of her wage-earners to fight against Germany in defence of such a state of things, when Germany, in spite of her tyrannous militarism and Junkerdom, took more care of the physical and educational condition of her people than the governing classes of Great Britain did of their wage-earners and dependents ? Because, as the English saw at once, capitalism dominated by Junkerdom would be worse than capitalism under a political and social system which would soon enable the last form of human domination to be overthrown. This, partly conscious, partly unconscious, was the motive which took the wage-earners of Great Britain on to the battle-field, where the parasitical and expropriating class were, as a class, with some exceptions, fighting for the maintenance of their own supremacy.

For fully twenty years before the war it was clear to all who knew Germany, and read easily the German papers and reviews, that preparations were being made for a struggle to the death against France and Great Britain by land and by sea. Our

workers were deceived into the belief that this was impossible, because our great employers, bankers, and the rich generally, were willing to run the risk so long as they gained more wealth. They therefore risked the issue. The workers, left unprepared and untrained by the political representatives of capital, fought and won the war; and, but for the politicians, would have won it at least two years before. This would have saved themselves and their families countless sacrifices.

But *how* did the nation win the war? By throwing aside the capitalism and competition which had exploited the community in peace, and by taking control of the resources of the Empire by the whole community for the purposes of war. That was a complete reversal of all previous policy. Not to go back to the long and exhausting twenty years' struggle against Napoleon, nothing of the sort was done in the Crimean, or in the South African War. In both of these cases, outside of the great State workshops at Portsmouth, Chatham, Woolwich, etc., established and maintained by the Government for long periods beforehand, the rest of the necessary work was done by capitalist firms independent of any official control. Although, also, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Bank of England suspended cash payments, there was no direct Government aid to the private banks. Of course the economic conditions were very different, but the contrast in method is nevertheless remarkable.

More remarkable still, no protest was raised against the course adopted immediately on the outbreak of war. The Government was, in fact, driven to prompt State action, in order to prevent capitalist finance and capitalist production, as well as distribution, from breaking down altogether. The Administration was compelled to use State credit, State control and State capital in order to pursue its contradictory policy of "keeping the present system"—the capitalist-competitive system, that is to say—"in being." This they officially declared to be their object. If State control and partial State ownership were undertaken by Mr Asquith's Liberal, *laissez-faire* administration, it was, therefore, because this was the only way to meet the temporary emergency, whilst carefully preparing for a return to the old system "after the war."

Thus it came about that, in 1914, when all English politicians believed, or pretended to believe, that the conflict with the

Central Powers would be a short war, the Ministry in office began to use State powers on a scale quite unprecedented. First it gave way to a shriek for help from the great Joint-Stock Banks of the Clearing-House. The directors all saw that, if they were left entirely to their own resources, they would either have to call up forthwith the unpaid margin on the subscribed shares held by their shareholders, get State aid in some shape, or go bankrupt. Why they should not have been left to take the first course, which was the proper, business-like way of proceeding, has never been explained. But, in fact, what occurred needs no explanation. Private finance, as represented by the shareholders, had to be propitiated. So the Government at once granted a *moratorium* against the public and in favour of the banks. The legislature, that is to say, rushed in to protect, or save from bankruptcy, institutions which had been, and still were, paying heavy dividends on shares, a great part of whose nominal amount consisted in uncalled capital. So enormous is the influence of these great banking institutions that the Government policy in favour of their shareholders was accepted almost without demur. Few saw what a strong argument would be placed at the disposal of the mass of the community, in the near future, in support of a demand for the nationalisation of the vast establishments, now almost a monopoly, and the constitution of a State Bank covering their whole field of financial operations.

Simultaneously with the banks the railways had to be dealt with. Here it was at once manifest that, if the various companies were left without any attempt at co-ordination, the war transport could not be carried on effectively. So the Government took control, guaranteeing to the debenture and shareholders, during the term of the war, all the dividends and profits they had previously earned! This was an exceedingly good arrangement for the shareholders, whose property would certainly have been commandeered on much more advantageous terms, had the question of their remuneration come before an independent arbitrator. But, whether the arrangement was good or bad, it was so contrived as to hand over to the State the actual administration of the railways, in concert with the shareholders, and without conceding to the people any future property in the indispensable means of transport represented by the railroads.

One serious effect of thus accepting the principle of State control without applying it to details, and generally fusing companies, was seen in the chaotic waste involved by not pooling the wagons belonging to the different companies, but leaving them and the private wagons to be hauled empty, hither and thither, for no useful purpose whatever. All this muddle arose from the Government's disinclination to apply fully, in practice, the nationalisation of railways which they had been forced to adopt partially in actual work, and wholly in principle. The result of this, on the return of peace, has been the reduction to sheer anarchy of our entire system of transport; and has strongly fortified the contention of those who maintain that nothing short of complete socialisation will solve the problem. Obviously the railwaymen and workers generally, who are now demanding this step towards thorough national organisation, in the interests of themselves and the community at large, have had nothing whatever to do with the mismanagement that followed the inefficient State control. Yet, somehow, the work necessary during the war was done.

Shipping naturally followed upon railways. Transport, under national management, of men and war material by sea was as essential as transport of men and war material by land. That was at once admitted and acted upon. The rights of the community were recognised as overriding the rights of shipowners. But here again our rulers, while giving way upon the principle of private arrangements, could not at first perceive that temporising is always a mistaken policy in stirring times. The Government commandeered only 1500 of the largest ships for State purposes. The result of this was that rates of freight ran up to unheard-of figures, for vessels left under private management. As commandeering extended, this became more and more apparent. But, even as it was, national control, by which vessels were run on the public account, proved an immense saving to the public, as against the wholesale confiscation by excessive rates of freight to which they would otherwise have had to submit from the shipowners and their companies. National control and temporary ownership were proved to be not only indispensable but generally beneficial. The deductions which are being drawn from this fact, in regard to further steps in the same direction, necessarily follow.

If, however, capitalist banking, capitalist railways and capitalist shipping demanded national co-ordination, even to preserve the owners themselves from destruction, mines come into the same category; and the more so since 300,000 coal miners actually volunteered to train and to go to the front long before conscription was enacted. Coal, therefore, was put under national control also, being essential in Great Britain to the working of all industries and distributive agencies. The effect of this upon the miners, as of partial nationalisation upon the railway workers, will be seen later. With mines and coal, nevertheless, as with other matters, even the most resolute anti-collectivists were forced to concede that the affairs of the nation took precedence, in war, of all private or company rights.

But the change did not end here by any means. It is doubtful, indeed, whether the dominant class of our day apprehended the extraordinary effect which the next step in the direction of State management and collectivism had upon the mind of the entire working population of Great Britain. This effect, though great, was not so promptly seen as in the previous cases. There can be no doubt, however, that the action of the Government in taking control of great factories, and still more in commandeering, extending and fitting up with the best and newest machinery other buildings, for necessary public work, made a deep impression. "If," men and women of intelligence asked themselves, "all this transformation can be brought about by the national administration in order to kill or maim men in war, why should not the same national machinery be used, under our own control, to maintain the whole community in peace?" That thought has been passing through an ever-increasing number of minds, since the war came to an end, when these great engines of production were handed back to the employing class, instead of being kept in national hands for the provision of useful goods for all.

The alteration in dealing with the land did not go anything like so far as in other directions. Indeed very little has been done. Although, at one point in the submarine campaign, Great Britain was within three weeks of starvation, the Government, in which Conservative influences prevailed, preferred to run the risk of famine for the many rather than face the opposition of the 30,000 landlords who own the island, the capitalist farmers

who cultivate the soil by the help of landless agricultural labourers, and the shipowners whose interests are bound up in conveying large imports from abroad, by encouraging cultivation of the soil at home. Some small improvements were made, and more land, about 2,000,000 acres, were brought under tillage to meet the threatening danger. But the old Game Laws, which had led to less and less cultivation, were still upheld, and little attention was paid to the fact that rats consumed the enormous quantity of wheat and grain represented by the sum of £20,000,000 yearly [1]—this loss rendering the population more dependent upon wheat brought in from without. The power of the farmers, who, although singularly deficient in agricultural skill, showed remarkable aptitude in taking heavy toll of the population over milk, meat and wheat, was increased rather than lessened. Hence the most difficult problem of all, in the coming transition period, remains practically untouched.

At the same time that these various experiments in collective administration—much of it corrupt, wasteful and inefficient—were perforce being made, the distribution of food took quite a new shape. A Ministry of Food was established, at first under the control of a multiple shopowner, not directly interested in making the new department a success. Unquestionably he made it far other than a success. But, when the threatening attitude of the people compelled the adoption of a reasonable policy, another type of Minister was appointed; and the principle was established that, in time of war, at least, the producers of the country were entitled to their full share of all the food that was to be had, and that they and their wives and children should be considered as far as was possible under such a society as still exists. Efforts were made to control prices by cost of production; and the general opinion steadily grew that profiteers who gained to an unprecedented extent by the war were little better than pirates. All this did much to shake the foundations of the whole school of economics created in the interest of those same capitalists and profiteers.

Unfortunately, in this direction likewise, the middle-class administrators refused to adopt a definite policy which might lead to a peaceful reconstruction. Though the Co-operative Wholesale Stores, who conduct their business on non-profit-

[1] They consumed more than twice that value in 1919.

making lines, supply more than a quarter of the entire population, and consist of workers having direct control of their own affairs, the Government twice refused to accept their offer to put the whole of this fine machinery at the disposal of the nation, for expansion on the same principles to serve the people at large. How very far this would have led towards a general co-operative instead of competitive system of distribution, and how easy and beneficial it would have been to extend during the war into production on a large scale, is obvious. But the influences of other classes were too powerful to allow the statesmanlike policy of the working-class co-operators to be accepted.

Certain it is that all the successive advances previously mentioned, and the consequent general opinion of the time, helped on by the economic development, have done more to awaken the people to a sense of what collective and co-operative agencies may do for their benefit, under the control of the community, than many years of further Socialist and Labour propaganda would have been able to effect. The question now, even among reactionaries, is, how the persistent cry from the masses for better conditions of existence should be conveniently met, not how it should be suppressed altogether.

Meanwhile, however, working-class combinations in Great Britain are growing more rapidly, and are becoming more formidable than anywhere else. Agitations and strikes for higher wages went on, as prices rose steadily during the war. Serious difficulties were only avoided by surrender on the part of the Government to the claims of Trade Unions, by appeals to the patriotism of the workers, and by taking leading Trade Unionists into a Coalition Administration. This policy, however, neither checked the growth of working-class organisations, nor damped down that rising demand for nationalisation and socialisation of monopolies which had so long been advocated by Socialists. Now upwards of 6,500,000 Trade Unionists, embracing no longer only the skilled artisans who form the aristocracy of labour, but a large portion of the agricultural labourers and unskilled workers of all kinds, voice at their Congress the aspirations in this direction of above half of the population of the island. Since the Armistice this powerful agglomeration of the forces of the proletariat has gained confidence in its own strength. Nor has the comparative failure of the Labour Party in the

political field lessened the feeling that, sooner or later, the future is to the workers of this country.

Nothing has aided their conviction more than the closer connection recently established with the Co-operative Movement. Taken together, the two organisations represent much more than half the population of Great Britain, and the idea at present is that they should work harmoniously with one another, in much the same way that the Co-operators and Socialists of Belgium make common cause on all occasions when the class struggle becomes acute. The significance of this consolidation of interests can only be disregarded by those who are determined not to recognise the conditions which surround them. The fact that the conservative co-operators have entered the political arena, standing for elections with what is to all intents and purposes a Socialist programme, is another incident which shows the tendency of the time.

The inclination of the great majority of wage-earners of Great Britain has been to use political action in the interest of their class, with the object, in the long run, of obtaining direct control over the industrial forces of the nation. This is true to-day. But the failure of the Labour Party to secure the number of seats to which it was unquestionably entitled in the House of Commons, if the House is to be regarded as truly representative of the people, has lent force to the contentions of another section which made way in the workshops, and generally among the more active and discontented wage-earners during the war. It has gained more ground still since the peace, owing to the poor show made by the political element at the last General Election, and the lack of vigour and initiative displayed by the Labour members who were sent to Westminster.

The policy which is favoured by these so-called extremists is that of "direct action." This means that, wherever the wage-earning class is sufficiently organised and disciplined, they should use the dangerous weapon of the general strike, no longer merely to obtain higher wages, but to gain possession of all the great industrial forces of the nation; thus bringing about a definite social revolution at one blow, whether the bulk of the people, or even the Trade Unionists themselves, who are the only really well-organised section, are thoroughly prepared for such a complete transformation or not. This is undoubtedly a policy.

As formulated by its chief advocates, it aims at the entire emancipation of the workers, and all other classes, from the mastery of the capitalist system, and the substitution of Syndicalism, the control of each trade by the combined workers in that trade—a scheme that has never been even partially thought out—or "guild" Socialism, for existing social arrangements. Since direct action, by the cessation of work in all the most important branches of production and distribution, has fervent propagandists and supporters in every civilised country, it is well to survey briefly the disadvantages attaching to this plan of campaign, from the point of view of the workers themselves, as opposed to the slower, but apparently more effective, and certainly less provocative means of political combination and the educated use of the vote. It may be assumed that, in both cases, the object is the same: not the enactment of palliative reforms under capitalism, nor the obtaining of higher wages under existing circumstances, but the immediate establishment of a Co-operative Commonwealth or Communist Republic. That is, in fact, the emancipation of the whole wage-slave class.

It must be noted that every general strike yet attempted in Belgium, France and Sweden has completely failed. This would be by no means a conclusive argument against it if it were the only objection. The United Kingdom differs from all these nations, and from every other nation, as has already been pointed out, in one very important particular. The whole of the working classes of England, Scotland and Wales are divorced from the soil. There is no conservative peasant population as there is everywhere else. Consequently, the economic antagonism of the country to the town appears only in the landlords and farmers, who together constitute a very small proportion of the whole population. The agricultural labourers sympathise with, and are impelled by the same motives as the wage-earners in the towns. If a general strike were called, therefore, for the purpose of bringing about nationalisation of the land, among other things, there is no reason why these labourers should not side with the others.

It cannot be doubted, however, that if direct action took so wide a sweep as is contemplated, involving the cessation of work in the mines, on the railways, at the docks, wharves and elsewhere, this would almost inevitably lead to civil war. There

may easily then arise differences between the strikers themselves; for it is by no means certain that men who are too slow and careless to vote for their own class champions would develop a whole-souled eagerness to fight for themselves and their class. Starvation is apt to turn even enthusiasts for overthrow into partisans of a military dictatorship. No Government, also, would, or could surrender at once to such an organised arrest of the functions of the whole national life, without a desperate effort, in which all the resources of civilisation would be used. Is it advisable even to threaten to resort to such desperate tactics, when the alternative of political action is still open? Is it well to risk a defeat, which might throw back, for a whole generation, that steady advance towards the greatest economic and social revolution the world has ever seen, a revolution which the intending strikers are convinced is now inevitable within a calculable period? Moreover, if success were assured, it is more difficult to keep than to conquer, as the Egyptian priest told Alexander the Great, unless a sound programme of reorganisation and administration is formulated and circulated beforehand. The reaction upon failure after victory would be terrible.

With political action, for which our forbears fought so stoutly, and for which at last we have secured the effective means, there is far less danger of armed conflict. Every year that passes, as events move to-day, tells more and more decisively in favour of the economic and social freedom of the workers. Every year there is less and less danger of reaction, if the workers are only true to themselves and compel their leaders to lead. All the time, too, the people are learning how to conduct our national and municipal and local affairs. In this their consolidation with the co-operators will greatly help. If, too, when the workers commanded a majority of the intelligent votes of the whole population, and had control over the political machinery, the minority attempted to maintain their outworn domination by force, then their chance of holding on to an untenable position would be small indeed.

In short, direct action, though it may be useful in argument as a possibility, leads to anarchy when resorted to in actual fact, and unnecessarily risks defeat.

Political action is a continuous education and training for administration of affairs.

Both call for the best possible organisation of the workers, as a class consciously striving for its own emancipation from economic, social and individual servitude.

There can be no clearer evidence of the enormous advance made in the opinions of the workers of Great Britain, within the last five years, than the discussion of this crucial issue at the present time all over the country. The great Railway Strike itself (undertaken for a rise of wages for the lower-grade workers) —whether justified by the behaviour of the Government, as the railway workers thought, or unreasonable as a sudden attempt to starve the whole community on an issue for which it had no responsibility—showed, as the public opinion of the majority of the wage-earners themselves proclaimed, what perfect organisation and discipline the Trade Union had attained. Well that it ended as it did. A few weeks later the voters of London captured the Borough Councils with their votes; and are finding, even after this remarkable and peaceful victory, the great difficulty of developing a satisfactory municipal administration under present circumstances.

It is one of the features of a really revolutionary period, such as we have manifestly entered upon in all advanced civilised countries, that events follow one another so fast that it is difficult to keep pace with them. Thus in Great Britain, where up to within the last six years the development had apparently been slower than in some other nations, the change in the Government policy itself has been more rapid than elsewhere. Administrative action is trying to catch up economic growth and labour conceptions. Even in peace, for example, purchase and control of food and its distribution, national and international, has remained largely under ministerial management. The League of Nations, inchoate and nebulous as it was and is, set to work at once to introduce an international code of restrictions upon the exploitation of labour by the capitalist class, which, not long ago, would have been universally denounced by the possessing minority all over the world as subversive Socialism. Yet scarcely a voice has been raised in favour of the old individualist competitive *laissez-faire* policy. This is very significant.

In Great Britain itself, notwithstanding a temporary reaction,

the general forward movement towards Collectivism and Socialism has found expression in official circles to such a degree that further developments in this direction cannot be greatly delayed. Nationalisation of mines recommended by a special Government Commission; nationalisation of railways publicly proclaimed as inevitable by a Cabinet Minister; nationalisation of milk production and distribution virtually accepted by official committee after committee; national effort to provide houses for the people sanctioned by the House of Commons; nationalisation of public health authority and organisation—all these proposals, though set back, evaded, or openly repudiated by a capitalist Government, amount to the recognition, over a very wide area, that the problems of the present and the immediate future cannot be solved save upon national—that is to say, Collectivist and Socialist—lines. The fetishism of money and the worship of individualism are dying down inevitably, even among the political agents of the rich. That in itself is a material and mental evolution.

Nor will it be possible to evade the consequences of this great change. The pressure from below cannot be withstood permanently, either by chicane, or by force. To guess precisely what form the transformation will take is beyond the scope of the most far-seeing intelligence. But the fact that all the organised workers of Great Britain are day by day coming closer together, with the massed Trade Unions and Co-operators in active concert for social and political ends, proves conclusively, to all who are not blinded by hatred, or bemused by greed, that here, that which but yesterday was denounced as Utopian is now the only practical polity for the nation; unless the possessing minority, seized with madness, should decide to force on a civil war. Nothing is a more hopeful sign that this misfortune may be averted than the general admission that a Labour Administration, pledged to nationalisation and socialisation, is virtually a certainty in the not remote future.

## CHAPTER XXXI

## "THE INTERNATIONAL"

The idea of the agreement of the chief European Governments for permanent peace was more than once seriously considered by the rulers of the Continent, but, as I shall presently relate, it never took form in any workable shape. Gradually the conception was replaced among enthusiastic idealists by the notion of a similar convention between the various peoples themselves. The famous Quaker Socialist, John Bellers, at the end of the seventeenth century favoured this view. Anacharsis Clootz—who has been accused recently of having been a German agent!—with others cherished a similar ideal of democratic international fraternity during the French Revolution. It became, in fact, later, a portion of the growing Socialist programme in France, taking a more definite shape as the antagonism of the workers of all nations to the growth of capitalism became more obvious. Robert Owen, the great English Socialist, advocated, and tried to establish, an International between the peoples at the beginning of the nineteenth century. St Simon vaguely shadowed forth such a desirable combination. Fourier did the same. The English Chartists likewise, in their rising period from 1831 to 1848, believed that the working classes needed some kind of international combination to enable them to exercise their power, and held this belief more definitely than has been generally understood. By 1848, the view that the interests of the workers in the various nations were not at variance, but, in general terms, identical, was spreading among revolutionists throughout Europe.

Yet no steps had been taken to concentrate this mental conception upon any scheme of definite action, to bring about the enactment of immediate practical palliatives of existing conditions, or to work in the direction of a general social upheaval. However, from the acceptance of the principle that the wage-earners of different race, language and nationality had no

adequate ground for fighting one another, there naturally arose the development of proposals for common strife against a common enemy. That common enemy was the capitalist class in every country, whose property and power the Socialists, as the advance guard of the working-class movement all over the civilised world, should endeavour, first to cripple, and then to acquire and transform. This called for universal education and organisation and discipline, so that a rising against the forces of economic domination, by the intelligent, class-conscious and capable but propertyless proletariat, might take place in all the capitals of Europe at once. Such was the programme of the extreme revolutionary party.

But the majority, even of internationalists, were much more moderate, and looked to an "International," with high moral ideals for both capitalists and labourers, as the utmost that could be achieved. The desire for higher wages held the Trade Unionists in its grip, as it has done ever since. Arrangements between the organised trades of the different countries, to obtain increased wages, to secure better protection for the limbs and lives of the workers, to press the demand for shorter hours—that was as far as they would go. To talk of social revolution was, thought the majority of workers in town and country, on the Continent as well as in Great Britain, not only untimely, but absurd. It was natural that high-minded fanatics should overrate their own influence, and enlarge to their followers upon the near approach of the golden age, of the new birth of a regenerated society, whose appearance should be helped by force as the midwife of progress. Had they spoken in less hopeful strain they would probably have made no progress at all at that time. In Great Britain, where no restriction upon the rights of public meeting and international combination then existed, there was really no revolutionary movement at all.

The International of 1864, therefore, was founded chiefly by English Trade Unionists, with the aid of Mazzini and others. But it soon came under the influence of Marx and Engels, whose great ability was marred for practical affairs by a spirit of personal dictation. Moreover, the doctrines of the two German leaders, apart from their method of enforcing them, as laid down in the famous Communist Manifesto, were too advanced for English working-class opinion at that date, while their Prussian

methods exasperated the French. Serious differences, consequently, soon arose; the Congress held in 1868 was of little account, and this first Socialist International was never of much importance.

Yet the untimely Commune of Paris and its sad ending was attributed largely to the guidance of members of the International body. That fact certainly hampered its usefulness to the Socialist movement; although Marx himself at first pointed out the hopelessness of the rising, which he afterwards excused and defended. But, apart from this, there were serious differences in the International itself—differences of principle which could not be composed. Marx represented the revolution of organisation and order, in which discipline of all forces was regarded as essential to success, especially if the attempt at international revolution by force were to be made. Historic and economic development were the main agents in the great struggle which must eventually arise: men could only understand and take advantage of the opportunities afforded them by the inevitable growth of economic forces.

Bakunin, Marx's chief opponent, belonged to quite a different school, as well as to a widely different race and training, from the German Jew economist. He was a Russian Communist-Anarchist, who believed firmly in the beneficent effect of terrorism, was convinced that the Commune and the Communism of small bodies of men was the real solution of the wage-slave problem; above all, he held that the individual had the right of revolt against the system which oppressed him, and was justified in using, on his own account, any weapon against the bourgeoisie. Two such men, with their respective friends and comrades, could never have worked long together in the same organisation. Their principles were wholly incompatible.

The antagonism came to a head at the Congress held at The Hague in 1872. No arrangement for peaceable co-operation could be made. By a rather absurd subterfuge Marx, when the whole thing was obviously falling to pieces, for the time being removed its "centre" from The Hague to the United States. The struggle between Bakunin and Marx gave the whole business a dramatic personal turn; but the truth is that the International could not then have continued, even if the leaders of the two sections had come to terms. There was general discourage-

ment throughout the Socialist parties of Europe. Moreover, there was a scission of opinions alike at the centre and among the different national sections. Marxism, as it was called, was not accepted even as a theory by the large minority of Socialists.

A scientific exposition, based upon materialist evolution, and an elaborate economic analysis of the existing social system, called for an amount of education, and a capacity for patient preparation and organisation, which the class to which it was specially addressed did not then possess. Even in Germany itself the Socialist Party was divided between the Marxist or International Party and the Lassalle or National Party. Of these two the latter was the more numerous, and appealed at the time more directly to the popular intelligence. In fact Lassalle's own propaganda had been much more easy of comprehension, and his pamphlets were simpler than those of the rival school. There was no fundamental difference as to the meaning and development of modern capital, or the necessity for the complete control of the means of making wealth by the State. But the followers of Lassalle held views upon the possibility of beneficent State Socialism, and the likelihood of the people gaining partial control by State agency, even of the Bismarckian type—views which the Marxists did not share. In addition, the Lassalle party, which conceived that Germany alone could play a leading part in the future of the Socialist movement, approached more nearly to the attitude of the Majority Social Democrats during the war than to the ideas publicly avowed by Marx and the leaders of his coterie.

So serious was the difference between them that it is alleged, when a rising was contemplated in Berlin during the siege of Paris, the two parties could not agree to combine; and Schweitzer, the leader of the Lassalle party, was reported to have arranged certain social reforms with Prince Bismarck. Whether or not this really occurred, it is clear that no action on the part of the German Social Democrats interfered with the immolation of France. The two parties were not combined until the Congress of Erfurt in 1878, and then quite contrary to the desire of Marx and Engels, whose advice on this matter was overruled by Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel, on behalf of the Marx party. From that time onwards in Germany the Social-Democratic Party formed one consolidated whole.

In France the difference lay not between Nationalists and Internationalists, but between Possibilists, who were willing to accept palliatives of the capitalist system as their immediate programme, and the Marxist group, whom their opponents dubbed Impossibilists, because, according to them, the Marxists wished to transform society at one blow. The Anarchists, also, who were advocates of direct action and physical force, had considerable influence among the French Trade Unions. By 1889 the Possibilists were much the most influential party in Paris, where they succeeded in carrying some important palliative measures on the Paris Municipal Council. In the great industrial cities the Marxists were the stronger, and gradually gained control in the municipal bodies. But the relations between the two sections were certainly not friendly.

Similar dissensions existed in other countries; but Belgium was remarkable for the admirable manner in which the Labour Party, a thorough-going Socialist Party, worked and coalesced with the co-operative organisations. This was a master-stroke. It gave the whole movement a sound financial basis that could not have been obtained in any other way. In times of strikes the strikers were most effectively helped by the Co-operatives with supplies of bread, etc., the daily party newspaper was maintained on lines which enabled it to be sold at half a farthing, and all the ordinary advantages of Co-operation were also gained. The fine "Maisons du Peuple" at Brussels, Ghent and elsewhere were the admiration of the entire International Socialist movement. This conjoint action of Socialists and Co-operators gave a good example to Socialist and Labour parties in other countries.

From 1872 onwards International Socialism slowly made way, though the International itself had broken up. Attempts were then made to reorganise it. These attempts were due to the efforts, not of the German Marxists and Impossibilists, but of French and English Socialists, who, while they recognised the great theoretical ability of Marx and Engels, were more opposed than ever to their distinct pro-German attitude, many French Socialists being of opinion that these two men acted as Internationalists mainly in the national interests of Germany. This conviction arose from the bitter and most imprudent attacks made upon France by Marx and Engels during the

Franco-German War, as well as from their dictatorial behaviour towards active French Socialists before and after that historic struggle. It is clear that the German leaders had little share in the endeavours made, in 1882 and 1883, and later, to re-establish a second International, in which Germans should not have complete control. English Trade Unionists and French Possibilists were the main agents in the work of reorganisation. This has been conclusively shown by Adolphe Smith in his *Pan-German Internationale*, which, though too harsh in its judgment of the motives and methods of the German philosophers in practical affairs, is entirely to be relied upon about matters of fact. Such international gatherings as were held afterwards were consequently free from German domination, much to the exasperation of Friedrich Engels, who, having been Marx's evil genius during his life, became the sole authoritative exponent of his theories after his death. That made matters worse. Acrid intolerance developed into malignant bigotry.

Thus nothing very important was done in the way of reconstruction until the year 1889, the centenary of the taking of the Bastille, and the commencement of the French Revolution. This great celebration, and the International Exhibition simultaneously held in Paris, ought certainly to have induced all Socialists to sink their antagonisms in one sober brotherly Congress. But the Marxists, as a section, were even more intolerant than usual. They would have neither part nor lot with the Possibilists and their friends, who then were the dominant Socialist Party in Paris, and held an important position on the Municipal Council. The practical success achieved by its members appeared, of itself, to disqualify the Possibilists in the eyes of the Pharisees of theoretical Socialism, who issued anathematical encyclicals inspired by Friedrich Engels. So two mutually recriminating Congresses were held in separate halls by the Possibilists and Impossibilists respectively, the anarchists being impartially present at both. This publication of the incapacity of Socialist fraternities to fraternise was greeted with storms of derision by the unregenerate world. The Christians were particularly jubilant, until they were reminded that their own propagandists were still more envenomed against one another, in the early days of their history.

Though a Marxist in theory myself, I was one of those who

strongly resented the attempt to impose upon the members of a great international movement the dictates of a family clique. I therefore took an active part in the Possibilist Congress. Looking back upon that unfortunate incident, which advertised Socialist dissensions quite unnecessarily, it is clear to me that certain German prejudices had a dominating influence in the Marxist camp. The French Socialists of the Possibilist school were anxious, not to say eager, to welcome Socialists of all opinions to the French capital on this memorable centenary: Anti-nationalism, not Internationalism, was already proclaimed from the other side. But the absurdity of people who were engaged upon the task of remodelling the world being unable to agree among themselves struck the public imagination.

Happily, by the year 1900, these differences were sufficiently composed to enable a full Congress of all International Socialists to meet again in Paris, where also the finest International Exhibition of all countries ever seen was held. The Congress of London in 1896, in which the British Trade Unionists and Socialists cordially co-operated, had led up to this fortunate cessation of fraternal animosity; and the exclusion of the Anarchists, who were bitterly opposed to all collective Socialist action in any form, as well as to political organisation in any shape, removed an element of infuriate discord from the Congress. This time even those most hostile to all Socialist ideas were compelled to admit that the Congress was conducted with dignity and ability, and that the whole of the debates produced the impression that questions of importance to mankind were being seriously discussed. It was recognised likewise that these Socialists, who were at once contemned and feared by the bourgeoisie, had among them orators, writers and philosophers in all languages who could more than hold their own with the representatives of the dominant class in any country.

The year 1900, the beginning of the twentieth century, may, therefore, be regarded as the date when Socialism or Social Democracy really took its place as the coming material religion of the universal brotherhood, first, of the workers of all nations, and then of world-wide humanity, in its various stages of class struggle and national and social development. Moreover, this Congress of 1900 will always be remembered because the new International was then founded and organised. As one who

took an active part in this fresh attempt to consolidate and extend the influence of Socialist co-operation and common international policy, who also proposed that the International Socialist Bureau, in which all national Socialist parties might be represented, should have its seat at Brussels, I can speak from personal experience of the elation and confidence which inspired the whole of the assembled Social Democrats and Socialist delegates of all shades of opinion, when this important step was taken, and the proceedings of the Congress on the subject were unanimously ratified. Paris, the city which has so often inspired humanity with the highest ideals for the emancipation of man, was fittingly chosen as the centre at which this new advance should begin. Belgium, so sadly made the cockpit of Europe in the dreadful international warfare of the past, would henceforth be the peaceful arena for the beneficial discussion of fruitful ideas for the future. So we all thought and felt in August, 1900.

The choice of Brussels for the centre of the Bureau was thoroughly justified. Having served as a member of the Bureau for the first ten years of its existence, as delegate for Great Britain, I can testify to the admirable work done by the Secretariat, first Servy and then Huysmans, from 1900 to 1914, while Vandervelde was an excellent chairman. At the meetings of the Bureau itself the power of the Germans, with their friends from Austria, Holland and Scandinavia, was very great, not to say supreme; and Belgium also fell under the same influence. This was natural. The German Social-Democratic Party was at that time by far the most numerous, the best organised, the most highly educated and the most completely equipped with funds, newspapers and Socialist literature of any country in Europe. Its leaders were men who, without abandoning their nationality, were imbued with international conceptions, and had displayed admirable, statesmanlike qualities under the exceedingly difficult conditions created for the party by Bismarck's anti-Socialist laws. Liebknecht and Bebel more particularly, by their fine protest against the war with France in 1870, and their denunciation of the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871, had acted up to their international Socialist principles, at the cost of great sacrifices and even imprisonment. Liebknecht had also undergone other terms of imprisonment on

account of his revolutionary opinions. All this justified the high regard, I had almost said deference, paid to the Germans in the Bureau and at the Congresses. If, at times, they displayed an inclination to exaggerate this independent deference into a claim to subservience on the part of Social Democrats of other nationalities, that was only human. But it was none the less unfortunate, even while the old group of Social Democrats were in control of the German party. For it put that party in a position to decide, with the help of the nationalities that invariably followed their lead, when and where International Congresses should be held, and even what matters should or should not be fully discussed at the general meetings of the Bureau. There was consequently some ground for saying that German ideas held sway. The case, in fact, might be put more strongly; but as, on the whole, the influence thus obtained was not actually injurious to the cause of Social Democracy in general, and all believed that German Social Democrats would every year gain more and more power to restrain the forces of militarism in Germany itself, there was no organised opposition to their leadership. Yet protests were now and then made against the almost exclusive attention given on the Bureau to minor political issues in Europe, to the detriment of questions of world-wide importance.

All through the period of my service on the Bureau the German Social-Democratic delegates, and their supporters of other nationalities, assumed that there could be no probability whatever of an unprovoked attack by Germany upon her neighbours; though German preparations for war by land and by sea were going forward upon an unprecedented scale, and the accumulation of vast quantities of military stores at Cologne had special significance in regard to Belgium, particularly when taken in connection with the great number of military sidings on the German side of the frontier, which could be of no use except for military purposes. I believe now that the Social-Democratic leaders held the same opinion as I did concerning the danger of these military preparations; but—I speak of the older school—they had convinced themselves that the Kaiser was opposed, in spite of these facts, to any attack, and that Social Democracy was getting strong enough to prevent a German war of aggression. Should Germany be herself attacked, however, then all

the German leaders, Liebknecht and Bebel included, said openly and plainly there would be no pacifism in the ranks of the Social Democracy. They would march with the rest in defence of the Fatherland. Bebel even went so far as to declare that, although he welcomed the existence of a powerful British navy as the only effective counterpoise to Junkerdom in Europe, a policy directed against Germany could reckon upon no support from the Social Democracy. It is interesting, in this connection, to recall that at one Socialist Congress, in the course of a public discussion, Bebel reminded the great French Socialist and orator, Jaurès, that France owed her Republic to the overthrow of the French Empire by Germany. I may add here that Wilhelm Liebknecht told me, not very long before his lamented death, that he viewed with anxiety the growth of pan-Germanism among the younger Social Democrats and Trade Unionists, but that he believed the principles of Social Democracy would nevertheless triumph.

The Congress of Amsterdam in 1900 was remarkable, not only for its good management and the general brotherly feeling and enthusiasm which prevailed, but also for the fact that the great continent of Asia was represented. Mr Dadabhai Naoroji had a most sympathetic hearing from the Congress when he expounded the wrongs of India under British rule, and claimed that all nations were interested, on the ground of their common humanity, in securing justice for the hundreds of millions of people who were suffering from British misgovernment and the ruinous economic drain of tribute. More dramatic was another striking incident. Russia was then engaged in a desperate war with Japan. Both countries were represented by duly authorised delegates to the Congress. Plechanoff, the famous Russian Social Democrat, and Katayama, the Socialist delegate from Japan, both declared that the war was injurious to their respective countries, so far as the mass of Russians and the majority of Japanese were concerned. Then they shook hands, amid great cheering from all the assembled delegates. Plechanoff, who had sacrificed all he could sacrifice for the overthrow of Tsarism in Russia, returned to Petrograd after the revolution of 17th March 1917, and was hounded to his death by Lenin and Trotsky. Katayama vanished from Japan, and is living as an exile in the United States.

At Stuttgart the best-organised and on the whole most successful Socialist Congress ever held was arranged by the German Party. It was here that Gustave Hervé, who has since completely changed his opinions, indulged in a furious outburst of irreconcilable pacifism, denying to any nation the right to defend itself against attack from without. This did not meet with acceptance from the Germans; and feeling was so strong that Hervé was improperly deprived by the chairman of his right to reply to his assailants. Four years later, at Copenhagen, pacifism was in the ascendant. Yet it was already quite clear, to all who knew Germany well and were kept tolerably informed, that the Junkers and the militarist party had determined upon war—which, indeed, was very narrowly avoided in 1911. The Pacifists shut their eyes to the bitter animosity which appeared at the Congress itself between the Slavs and the Germans, in spite of their common Socialism, and went so far as to choose Vienna as the place for the next Congress in 1914. Some predicted that, if such a Congress should be held, the conflict between the two races, the oppressed and the oppressors, would break out in much more formidable shape, and were, of course, derided.

What had come of these International Congresses and the frequent meetings of the International Socialist Bureau? In practice nothing; in general good understanding and mutual appreciation between the various nationalities a great deal; so it was generally assumed. Socialism was gaining ground in every nation—most of all in Germany, where, before 1914, no fewer than 4,500,000 votes were cast for Social Democracy, electing upwards of 100 members to the Reichstag. 1,000,000 members were paying their weekly contributions into the party funds, and 90 daily newspapers were spreading Social-Democratic opinions throughout Germany. The Social Democrats, who never disguised their revolutionary programme, were obviously the coming political party in the Fatherland. In France, Austria, Italy and, in fact, all over Europe, Socialism was steadily making way, and deputies were being elected on a definite Socialist platform, while in several nations Socialists were taking their seats in the Cabinet as ministers. Never before in history has any revolutionary party made way so rapidly, and so peacefully, as the Socialist Party did on the continent of

Europe from 1900 to 1914. Everywhere the same ideas were propagated; everywhere, according to the stage of economic development reached, similar practical measures were advocated. Even in Great Britain, where economic development was most advanced and social and political education was least relatively effective, the Labour Party was being forced, almost against its will, to adopt definite resolutions in favour of the nationalisation and socialisation of the great productive and distributive agencies, including the land. The fact that in Great Britain all the workers are proletarians, the agricultural labourers being as destitute of property in any shape as the wage-earners of the cities and towns, rendered it certain that, in any period of shock and perturbation, the political Labour Party and the Trade Unions would make common cause on a series of wide Collectivist and Socialist proposals, leading, if carried, to the establishment of a Co-operative Commonwealth.

Then came the crash of the Great War. It is quite possible that the continued success of Socialism in Germany had a share in hastening on Germany's commencement of hostilities. However that may be, it is certain that she was responsible for the failure of all efforts to maintain peace. It was a definite and clearly thought-out plan of the Central Powers—Austria-Hungary holding quite a secondary place—to impose upon Europe and the world the leadership of autocratic, aristocratic, militarist and State-organised Germany. Of the effect produced upon Great Britain, in the direction of bureaucratic control, by the administration of the resources of the island and the Empire I have written above. Similar results were to be observed in every country which came into the war, including the United States.

But the action of the majority of the German Social Democrats, at the beginning and all through the duration of the war, more than justified the apprehensions which Wilhelm Liebknecht had expressed. They proved false to all the principles they had so vigorously urged Socialists to adopt, and betrayed the entire International Socialist movement so completely that it will be no easy matter for sane Socialists of other nationalities ever to trust them again. The Germans, who had been regarded as the leaders of Socialism, and had, in effect, obtained control of the International Socialist Congresses, did not even

adopt a neutral attitude in the Reichstag, or in their own and other countries. After pledging themselves by their most prominent leaders in Brussels (when speaking on the same platform as Jaurès within a few days of the declaration of war), and in Paris, to vote against the war credits, on their return to Berlin they rushed forward, full of chauvinist enthusiasm, to support to the utmost of their power one of the most infamous wars of Imperialist aggression ever waged. Their nominally pacifist Social-Democratic organisation, whose strength and discipline Socialists of other nationalities had always admired and praised, was fully used to help the Kaiser and his Junkers in their atrocities in Belgium and France. Worse than this, after neutral Belgium, guaranteed security by Germany, had been outraged in the unspeakable fashion which all the world knows, the German Social-Democratic Party sent an official mission to the Belgian Socialists, headed by Noske, in order to persuade their brethren to put themselves entirely under German rule. Nothing more treacherous or disgraceful than all this can be imagined. It struck a deadly blow at International Socialism, and made the efforts of peace advocates not only futile, but exasperating. Here is the great drawback to International combinations. It is always possible, as in this case, for a single strong national group to betray all the rest.

The mischief done by the Germans to the general Socialist cause was increased by those Socialists in the belligerent and neutral countries, who, in their ecstasy of pacifism, wrought themselves up to the conviction that capitalism, dominated by the Junkers, would be preferable to capitalism, standing on its own demerits. They thus became virtually pro-Junkers in the struggle, and were the cause of harmful scissions in every Socialist camp. So peaceful were they that useless devastations, rape, murder and wholesale pillage were carefully minimised and excused, if only these were committed by their friends the enemy. When to this was superadded a fervent desire to embrace the hostile Social Democrats at Stockholm, in the midst of the war, it was easy to detect whither all this craven sentimentality must lead. The result of the General Elections in France and Great Britain, while the impression made by German crimes was still fresh in the public mind, showed only too clearly how harmful to democratic and Socialist progress these tactics

had been. Downright reaction was given a new lease of Parliamentary life; and direct action, as advocated by Syndicalists and Anarchists, received a sharp impulse, to the detriment of political methods of any kind.

Meantime, the world had seen in Russia the practical effect of the endeavour of a knot of educated Socialists, wholly fanatical, cruel and unscrupulous, to force a form of social transformation upon a great country, whether the people were ready for it or not.

Although, as I shall show in detail in my next chapter, all the high principles of Socialist fraternity and brotherly good-will have been defiled, in the most horrible manner, by a set of fanatics, many of the outside public have, nevertheless, taken for granted that Bolshevism is the inevitable outcome of organised Social Democracy. Thus a damaging prejudice has been created in the minds of people, who, by the sheer force of events, had come to admit that some form of Socialism was inevitably the next step in the progress of humanity. Such an admission was already weakening the forces of opposition, and preparing the way for a peaceful understanding between the organised working classes, more and more influenced every day by Socialist thought, and more and more inclined to accept the Socialist programme. Bolshevism has done a very great deal to arrest this promising development; while in regard to large portions of the workers themselves its influence has been deplorable. The very same section of the International Socialist Party in each country which went pacifist, anti-nationalist and pro-German during the war, which declared for peace at any price, even at the price of Junker domination in Western Europe, has embraced what its members believe to be revolutionary Bolshevism. This at the time when the Bolshevist leaders themselves perforce are abandoning all the principles, as well as very nearly the whole programme they began with, and have ruthlessly endeavoured to establish a servile State with capitalism more dominant than ever.

This section of Socialists are ready to accept from semi-barbarous Russia, which has no political history and is only at the beginning of her industrial era, a scheme of social and political reorganisation which the Bolshevists do not believe in themselves.

In spite of these manifest truths the new International, utterly regardless of the best traditions of its predecessor, began its premature career by applauding the work of the Bolshevists. The only difference between the two sections at the Socialist Congress of Lausanne was as to the extent to which the gospel of Bolshevist Moscow should be welcomed as a genuine Socialist revelation. That the whole thing was a horrible travesty of both Democracy and Socialism none apparently dare assert. A sort of mental terrorism pervaded the assembled delegates, and their surrender to a small but truculent and butcherly minority in Russia must have a most baleful effect upon International Socialism as a whole.

Since then the breaches between the different sections of the Internationalists of Socialism remain unhealed. Furious manifestos from Moscow, issued on behalf of the "Third International," having its headquarters in that city, call upon "Communists" in every country to begin the reign of peace and brotherhood by slaughtering the bourgeoisie and the "moderate" Socialists in their respective nations. This at a time when the dictators of the proletariat in Russia itself are surrendering wholesale to bourgeois capitalism at home and abroad, and are proposing to guarantee payment of interest on the huge external Russian debt in order to propitiate bankers and bondholders in London and Paris.

At the "Second International," held at Geneva in August, 1920, ill-organised though it was, more restraint, capacity and common-sense were generally displayed. The German delegates admitted the responsibility of Germany for the war, and declared against the pseudo-Communist tyranny of Bolshevism. By the time another International Congress is held, as suggested in London, some arrangement may be arrived at which will prevent serious altercations. Meantime the best thing Socialists and Social Democrats can do is to sink their internal animosities and present a united front to the growing forces of reaction abroad and at home.

The hope for the future of International Socialism lies in a community of peoples, each nationality working within its own borders for the educated and orderly realisation of its co-operative ideals by political action. The form of national and international Socialism will be decided through common agree-

ment, according to the stage of economic and social development at which the bulk of the population in each country has arrived. A resort to arms can only be justifiable when the minority in free nations refuses to obey the political decisions of the majority. To support a grimly ludicrous "dictatorship of the proletariat," set on foot by a handful of middle-class men, and kept in existence by the terrorism of a small minority, is directly opposed both to democracy and freedom.

The world is in a period of revolutionary change. International co-ordination is universally discussed, even by capitalists. But thorough national education, coupled with economic liberty for the workers in each nation, must come first. Nothing could be more harmful to real progress towards the realisation of this ideal than the promulgation to the world, by an International Socialist Congress, that there is a short-cut to emancipation through the dictatorship of an intolerant and unscrupulous minority.

## CHAPTER XXXII

## THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The growing anxiety of the whole civilised world to prevent the recurrence of such a cataclysm as recently threatened mankind with the destruction, or mutilation, of a considerable portion of the males of the white race found its immediate embodiment in the proposals of President Wilson for the formation of a League of Nations, to ensure and maintain peace. The idea was not wholly a new one. The Amphictyonic Council, so artfully manipulated by Philip of Macedon, was the first known combination of peoples for the purpose of avoiding war; and in modern times the scheme of a League of Nations was seriously proposed to Elizabeth of England by Henry IV. of France.

Henry IV. of Navarre was a man of such powerful character and ability that, had he ascended the throne of France at an earlier age, he might well have played with success the part which Louis XIV. attempted later. Only Elizabeth of England, with Lord Burleigh at her side, was at all on the same level with himself. It is noteworthy that Henry sketched out, and to some extent filled in and submitted his gigantic plan of pacification, before he had arrived at the position which would enable him to take even the preliminary steps towards its execution. So thorough-going was the general programme laid down, and so far-reaching its inevitable effects, whether successful or unsuccessful, when attempted on the large scale contemplated, that Sully, as he himself tells us, wholly failed to comprehend what his master was aiming at. However, he gradually became convinced of the value of the project, and was thenceforth more enthusiastic in favour of it than Henry himself.

When the idea of ensuring the future peace of Europe was thus discussed and put in shape, Austria seemed as great a source of danger to her neighbours as Germany is to-day. Destruction of Austrian greatness and threatened dominance was the starting point of the entire programme. The whole campaign,

military, political and territorial, was carefully thought out beforehand. Nothing less was contemplated than such an attack, or menace of attack, by an irresistible force, as would permanently cripple the House of Hapsburg. All the princes of Europe were to be enriched with what was taken from Austria, and, this being equally distributed, the League of Peace would be established on the basis of general equality.

France and England were to gain nothing in the general redistribution except "spheres of influence," to use a modern phrase. To Elizabeth, on this question of possible extension on the Continent in return for her support, is attributed the sensible remark that the British islands, under all their different monarchies and variation of their laws, had never undergone any serious misfortunes, except when they went outside their own little continent. So long as they looked after their own subjects only, they fared well enough.

Altogether, here was a programme for transforming the map of Europe which has never been equalled, until Prussianised Germany set to work in earnest to carry out her still greater design in 1914. Throughout, Henry IV. and his coadjutors assumed that the House of Austria would be so intimidated by the formidable league against it, that the Emperor, accepting the substance for the shadow, would exchange a definite supremacy for an illusory pre-eminence, in order not to interfere with the establishment of the great League of Peace. But the main promoters of the rearrangement probably expected the Emperor would fight to the death; and Henry IV.'s great scheme of permanent peace would have begun with a tremendous European war.

Further, the attack was not to be directed against Austria alone. Turkey was also to be disposed of, and posterity relieved of any concern about the Eastern Question at the same time. The Turks, in fact, were to be deprived of all their possessions in Europe and carefully restricted to Asia.

Thus, the establishment of a permanent League of Peace, which must almost certainly begin with a great war against Austria, was to be followed by another great war against Turkey. And, as if this were not enough, European Christianity was to be consolidated on an unshakeable basis, whose main idea was that the antagonism between Catholicism and Protestantism

should be regarded as a drawn battle. The existing position was stable and not to be meddled with. Established principles were to be recognised as permanent and no further variations must be permitted: "For there is nothing more pernicious than freedom of belief." A cynical onlooker might draw a parallel between this portion of Henry IV.'s great plan and that clause of the modern League of Nations which makes all the present territorial bounds of the Great Powers, in a like manner, stable and not to be meddled with. No further national and racial variations are to be permitted.

Doubts and difficulties as to what might occur on the field of battle, and in the domain of religious opinion, easily suggested themselves to such cool, detached minds as those of Elizabeth and her great minister, Burleigh. The Queen's own statements to Sully, though showing that she fully appreciated the great project, if it could be carried through, make it clear also that she was quite alive to the obstacles in the way of success.

In any event, Elizabeth, as she hinted to Sully, would do her best to keep out of a Continental war. But she did not point out to him that, at the end of any struggle, England would hold the balance between the two conflicting parties, and be able to throw her weight on the side most congenial to her interests.

As no portion of this vast programme was ever put into operation, owing to the assassination of its originator, it is scarcely worth while to consider what would have happened, had this great Council once been formed. That it could as easily have proved a centre for cabal and intrigue, as for peace and good-will, is apparent at once. The history of the Amphictyonic Council itself is not encouraging as a precursor of Henry's great enterprise. A Philip of Macedon, or an Alexander of seventeenth-century Europe, could scarcely have desired a more favourable field on which to exert his influence to the advantage of his own country. And it is undeniable that such an ambitious warrior king or statesman would more probably arise in the France of that day than in any other nation. None the less, the conception of a peaceful Europe, submitting all its differences to adjudication by a League of Peace, established to hold the balance even between all parties, was a magnificent idea.

Since this project of Henry and Elizabeth was put before Europe, no leading European monarch or statesman has ven-

tured to promulgate similar notions. Philosophers and economists, however, seeing no prospect of reducing their theories to practice, have been bolder. William Penn and his fellow-Quaker, John Bellers, at the end of the seventeenth century took up the tale, and have been followed by St Simon, Owen, Kant and Mazzini, as well as by St Simon's pupil, Comte. They all advocated a United States of Europe, as a provision against war and an aid to general progress.

It has been the work of Germany to revive the projects of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century in a more or less practical shape, by forcing all nations to consider some means of averting for the next generation, and future generations, such a cataclysm as that which she brought upon mankind in the twentieth century. During the stress of war, all the European Powers felt that some kind of a League to Enforce Peace was necessary to their very existence; and President Wilson in his important address of 22nd January carried forward, in the manner best calculated to attract the attention of the world, the propaganda of such a League.

The proposed League of Nations, of which Mr Wilson's predecessor, Mr Taft, was president, held its preliminary Conference in June, 1915, at Philadelphia, and its first Congress in Washington on 26th May 1916. At the dinner which closed this Congress, President Wilson delivered the final speech that was practically an official rehearsal of the address of 22nd January to Congress. He opened on this occasion in the following terms :—" It is right that I, as spokesman of our Government, should attempt to give expression to what I believe to be the thought and purpose of the people of the United States in this vital matter." And he went on to formulate on behalf of the nation, as its chief citizen, what its thought and purpose was : " We believe these fundamental things : First, that every people has a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live. . . . Second, that the small States of the world have the right to enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty, and for their territorial integrity, that great and powerful nations expect and insist upon. And, third, that the world has a right to be free from every disturbance of its peace that has its origin in aggression, and disregard of the rights of peoples and nations."

He concluded by saying : " In every discussion of the peace

that must end this war it is taken for granted that peace must be followed by a definite concert of the Powers, which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again." How sadly events have belied these hopeful words! Now, two years after the end of war, a very large section of the peoples in all the belligerent countries, if not the majority of them, have returned to their old belief that mankind has not yet arrived at the point where universal peace can be secured. Hating war, they still can see no means whereby it is to be definitely averted.

Unfortunately the "Convention," as it was called, which gave precedence to the League of Nations before the conclusion and ratification of the Treaty of Peace, has done much to wreck the whole plan. If peace had been promptly and equitably secured after the Armistice, the League of Nations, following thereupon, could have been modified to accord with the views of the various nations brought together in friendly combination. But now the refusal of the United States to be in any way responsible for the arrangement, as it stands, has rendered the League almost useless. For America is not only the most important agricultural and industrial, as well as the wealthiest nation in the world, but she is also the most formidable single Power of all.[1] Her absence from the League, and the apparently growing disinclination of her people to accept any permanent responsibility which might drag them into further world-wide complications, outside their own definite interests, puts the whole scheme on a very different footing from that contemplated by President Wilson, when he pressed his personal convictions upon the Peace Congress of Paris. The mere fact that at present the League, or so much of it as subsists, is wholly powerless to impose its decisions by force upon any recalcitrant member, and its incapacity for the same reason to accept any

[1] The following extract from a recent official document gives a fair idea of what the abstention of the United States from the League of Nations means, from the economic point of view, bearing in mind that these figures of production tend to increase rather than to diminish: "It has been estimated that, although the U.S. represents but 6 per cent. of the world's population, it produces 70 per cent. of the world's copper, 66 per cent. of the mineral oil, 75 per cent. of the corn, 60 per cent. of the cotton, 52 per cent. of the coal, 40 per cent. of the iron and steel, and 25 per cent. of the wheat of the whole world." The increase of the wealth of the great Republic during the war has been quite phenomenal, and Europe is heavily in her debt.

" mandate " for the reorganisation and rule of a chaotic region, such as Armenia, proves that, excellent as the ideas which animate its advocates may be, they themselves are quite unable to carry them out.

Obviously, also, there are serious objections to the entire form of the League so far designed. Not only are the workers of the various countries which constitute the League completely excluded from direct authority over its proceedings, by elected delegates, or otherwise, but the domination of each nation over the territories it holds outside its own nationality is assumed to be permanent, upon the lines decreed by the Treaty of Peace. Thus India and Ireland, to say nothing of Mesopotamia, Persia and other regions, are to remain under English rule, regardless of the principle of self-determination. Tonking, Cochin-China, Madagascar, Tunis, etc., are guaranteed to France, Korea and Shantung to Japan, the Philippines to the United States, the Dutch East Indies—Java, Sumatra, etc.—to Holland, Tripoli to Italy, and so on. Therefore the League of Nations begins by recognising the supremacy of the white man over hundreds of millions of peoples of a different colour; and goes on to accord similar rights to Japan over the people to whom she owed her civilisation in the past. This, then, is an Imperialist and Capitalist, not, assuredly, a Peoples' League. And the General Secretary appointed to carry on the work of the League of Nations is Mr Arthur Balfour's ex-secretary, the Hon. Sir Eric Drummond, who brings with him to his new office all the traditions of the English Foreign Office, in matters of diplomatic intrigue and secret agreements.

Anxious, therefore, as all who have experienced the horrors of the recent war must be, to accept and work for any organisation, national or international, which can prevent a still worse upheaval in the future, something very different from the present combination is needed to ensure peace in our time. Peace, in fact, can only be made certain by the determination of the peoples themselves to resist, by pressure at home, all attempts of the governing class in any country to enter upon hostilities. This cannot generally be brought about until the workers themselves are organised, nationally and internationally, to act upon agreed lines in their own interests.

Certainly the League of Nations has endeavoured to set on

foot an International Council, which shall ensure shorter hours of labour, improved rates of remuneration and better social conditions generally for the workers of all countries. That such a Council should have been already established, and be able to secure general official assent from many nations to the proposal of reforms recently advocated by Socialists alone—such as a maximum normal working day of eight hours—proves conclusively that the idea of national and international action to restrict the exploitation of the workers of all nations has made great way, even among the Ministerial rulers, who primarily represent the interests of the landowning and capitalist classes. This, in itself, is a great peaceful advance which will be generally beneficial if maintained.

It is possible that if the present scheme were reconstructed on a much wider foundation, and directly elected delegates of the workers of all countries had full representation—leading inevitably to control, in the near future—on the Council of the League, some efficient machinery, divorced from Imperialism and Capitalism, and relieved of the old harmful diplomacy, might be evolved. But until the workers themselves, who furnish the armies with troops and provide their supplies, have such effective power, until the League and its Council have also, by general consent, an armed force at their disposal, able, in the last resort, to give effect to their decisions, little success will be achieved. It is inconceivable that those who constitute the fighting, as they do the producing, forces of every nation can be permanently excluded from any efficient League of Nations, though their presence in sufficient numbers to give them authority would undoubtedly be opposed by the dominant class of our day, from fear of the decisive social issues which would then at once be raised.

Meanwhile the champions of orderly, organised, political social revolution are gaining ground in every European country to an extent undreamed of only a few years ago. A great, successful revolution need not necessarily be a forcible and bloody revolution. Thus in Sweden the well-known international revolutionary Social Democrat, Branting, has quite peaceably become Prime Minister. In Czecho-Slovakia President Masaryk is favourable to Social Democracy, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are Social Democrats; and the great

agrarian revolution which expropriated the large landowners was carried through without the shedding of a drop of blood. In Belgium, the Social Democrats in the Coalition Cabinet are the most powerful ministers of the whole administration. In Italy no Ministry is permanent which does not to a large extent reconcile its views with the opinions of the one hundred and fifty-six Socialist deputies in the Chamber. In France the unfortunate Pacifism and the Bolshevism of many of the Socialist leaders, together with the improper apportionment of votes in the constituencies by the Government at the last General Election, have prevented the Socialist Party from obtaining its rightful representation in the Assembly, while its internal dissensions have weakened its influence. Yet their own growth in numerical strength, and the conclusive evidence that their political influence is the sole alternative to a constant outbreak of strikes, is convincing those who are hostile to Socialism in theory that its influence must be recognised in the practical affairs of the nation.

In Germany the struggle eventually will be between Social Democrats and reactionists. Intermediate factions are being crushed out. The Kapp *coup* was brought to naught by the Independent Social Democrats, and they are the principal opponents of the masked manœuvres of the Ludendorff group.

Unless, therefore, the League of Nations takes full account of the great and growing aspirations of the mass of mankind, abandons altogether its Imperialist and Capitalist policies and relations, reassures doubters of its good faith in regard to any risings of the people which may threaten the existing system of economic exploitation of the working class in the different affiliated countries, it is extremely improbable that it will attain any considerable amount of success. While the philanthropists of capitalism have been philanthropising, their fellow-capitalists have been appropriating. England in particular, in concurrence with her special ally, Japan, has pursued a policy of annexation which inevitably sows the seeds of future wars. The same with France, the same with Italy. And the newly emancipated States, as witness Poland, are not disinclined to follow in their wake. Meanwhile, to say nothing of Ireland and Egypt, nearly half the population of the planet in India and China are effectively shut out from championing their own freedom in the

one case and the historic territorial integrity of their country in the other. Yet these are the very rights of emancipation from foreign control and protection from foreign aggression which, according to some of its principal working-class supporters, the League of Nations has been established to secure.

Economic causes produce social revolutions. But national antagonisms and racial oppression, as well as economic rivalry, have often brought about wars. So far, it would appear that there is nothing better calculated to usher in an era of peace in the constitution of the League of Nations than there was in the "great plan" of Henry IV. of Navarre, or in the futile Conventions of The Hague. All history shows that there is no more dangerous element in human nature than misguided emotion or unreasoning zeal. Both will be at the mercy of greedy capitalism and designing militarism, already preparing, from at least two quarters, to take advantage of the opportunities for intrigue offered them in the League of Nations.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

## BOLSHEVISM AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Russian Revolution of March, 1917, was a remarkable instance of the demand for a great political and a great social transformation coming simultaneously, the people as a whole being prepared in sentiment, though not in intelligence and education, for a complete change. It had long been clear that the emancipation of the serfs decreed by the Tsar Alexander II. had not materially improved the condition of the agricultural population or given them that control over the land of their country which might have led to a peaceable and beneficial reconstruction in the course of the next forty or fifty years.

As it was, the liberation of the serfs, which was regarded in Western Europe, and even by some of the Russian reformers themselves, as a splendid step forward to economic freedom, proved to be one vast illusion. Serfs were only nominally benefited by their enfranchisement. They were actually made to pay heavily for the land they cultivated. Their social status became, therefore, in some respects, even worse than it had been before. Consequently a whole series of unorganised peasant revolts, of the type of the old risings of serfs and peasants in Western Europe, took place all over Russia, and these were regarded by the Tsar's Government as criminal ingratitude for the gracious advantages accorded to them from above. Such spasmodic upheavals were suppressed with ruthless cruelty, and all who sympathised with the risings of the deluded peasants in town or country, whether they were avowed Socialists or merely opportunist reformers, were treated with the utmost rigour as enemies of a paternal government whose high-minded policy was being misrepresented and used by misguided revolutionaries as a pretext for upsetting all law and order.

So hopeless did the position become, owing to the bigotry and tyranny of the autocratic monarch and his officials, that capable and intelligent patriots and enthusiasts were compelled to form

secret societies, and to resort to terrorism and assassination from below, as the only possible means of resisting effectively legalised torture and murder from above. The survivors of these devoted men and women, the majority of whom suffered death by hanging, or from prolonged incarceration, have been able to show, under better conditions, that only the most unendurable tyranny drove them to commit, or to connive at, deeds which they would have been the first to stigmatise as crimes, had only reasonable freedom of propaganda and education been allowed. It is even possible, as some have contended, that, had their methods of violence been carried out as fully as originally intended, they might have rendered impossible the systematic tyranny under which they groaned, and might thus have brought the land question, the question of all questions, to an earlier solution in Russia. Such hypothetical possibilities need not now be considered. Events followed their course, little affected by the "removal" of individuals, from the Tsar downwards.

Owing to increased taxation, payment of the land "indemnity," official corruption and defective methods of cultivation, together with a lack of highroads or local roads, and a deficiency also of railroad communications, the peasants in rural Russia became poorer and poorer, while a relatively very much smaller proportion of the population was being developed into a genuine landless, propertyless proletariat, in the great cities, mostly in the employment of the State. So bad had the conditions of the emancipated serfs become that in the early years of the present century, just prior to the attempted revolution of 1905-1906, the ablest Russian authority on economics, A. A. Issaieff, ex-Professor of Political Economy at the University of St Petersburg, declared that it would require thousands of millions of roubles merely to *put back* Russian agriculture where it had been twenty years before. There had been, during that period, a steady and cumulative decline in Russian agricultural prosperity, although exports of agricultural produce to Western Europe had increased. Official Russian reports give evidence to the same effect. At the same time, the increase of the industrial workers in the cities provided a field for the propagation of Socialist doctrines, which in all countries have followed the establishment of the great factory industry,

and the development of the wage-earning class attached thereto.

Thus, as time went on, the disaffection of the peasantry was intensified and the ill-feeling of the wage-earners in the cities grew apace. In both cases there were the soundest grounds for ill-feeling against the ruling minority, who used a section of the people, in the form of bureaucrats, police officers, spies and ignorant soldiery, to crush down all resistance on the part of the overwhelming majority of Russians. There were but two redeeming economic and social features in this day of ruthless repression: the growth of the democratic zemstvos and co-operative combinations, with the spread of the agrarian Socialism of the Social Revolutionaries in the rural districts, and the creation of groups of Marxian Social Democrats, educated in the full principles of scientific Socialism, among the workers of the towns. But both these attempts to organise for a definite Socialist advance, suited to the stage of civilisation at which the country as a whole and its various class and industrial sections had arrived, were regarded by Nicholas II. and his reactionary advisers with equal hostility, and kept down as far as possible by every available means.

Throughout this long record of Tsarist tyranny and religious bigotry, varied by continuous persecutions and occasional pogroms of the Jews, the old Russia of the "natural economy," in which nobles and peasants alike lived upon the produce of their own soil, and were clothed with their own village and domestic manufactures, was passing gradually into the exchange stage, in which production for the market and money control of commerce became the rule, and the old production for use faded. Not only were the towns and mining centres affected by this modification, but a silent revolution in rural life was brought about, drawing a proportion of the peasantry, as we have said, from the country into the larger agglomerations of population.

Simultaneously, also, the small industries carried on by the former serfs in their cottages throughout the weary months of winter, when no agricultural work could be done, fell into the hands of sweaters of the worst kind. The descriptions given in reports, by men who specially examined into the conditions of air, heat, cleanliness and artificial light, under which these small manual industries were conducted, and the prices paid to the

toilers, alone justified social insurrection. In order to verify every detail of the horrible disclosures thus made, one of the investigators—a man of high academic distinction—devoted himself to work in these winter avocations for two successive years, in different parts of Russia.

That the peasants were compelled by excessive taxation, failing crops and debt to submit, summer and winter, to such slavish misery, in order merely to live, strengthened their longing to possess the land for themselves and their children, and was the main point of any revolution, so far as they were concerned. The generation of Russians from 1862 to 1898, when the Social-Democratic Party was founded by Plechanoff, and the Social Revolutionaries, with the zemstvos virtually behind them, were actively at work, constituted the direct preparatory period for the coming Russian upheaval. Their theoretic differences about the policy to be adopted, when the actual revolution came, were even then apparent. But the terrorist action of the Government forced the conservative rural population to make common cause with the extreme section of the wage-earning population of the towns. The terrorism of 1877 to 1890 revived.

Thenceforward, as has been well said, Russian politics became a conflict between two terrorisms: the terrorism of absolute Tsardom above, the terrorism of organised revolution below. But the former was exerted against a whole nation: the latter was the protest against frightful tyranny by a few individuals. During the whole of this desperate struggle, in the early years of the twentieth century, events told, as all can now see, on the side of the people. While the peasants were still called upon to pay the yearly indemnity for the land, which ought to have been granted to them gratuitously; while their zemstvos and co-operative societies were more stringently dealt with than ever; while heavy taxation and official malversation rendered their lot more and more unendurable; while the still small but growing city proletariat was exposed to exploitation and maltreatment in every shape; while the educated classes were being driven to recognise that only by complete revolution could Russia hope to overcome the infinite mischief caused by tyrannous, corrupt and incapable misgovernment—while all this was going on, the Japanese War, with the resulting humiliation of Russia's military power, displayed to all Russians a lack of intelligence, honesty

and statesmanlike qualities on the part of their rulers which shook popular confidence to its foundations.

The Government of the Tsar was proved to be as incompetent in military matters as it was cruel and inefficient in civil affairs. Every soldier and sailor who returned from the Far East, after the Peace of Portsmouth, told in country and town such tales of neglect of the common people in arms, of the brutality of officers, of the inferiority of the generals, and of wholesale malversation and even civil and military treachery by officials in high places, that the whole Empire was filled with indignation. Hence, as sometimes occurs in human affairs, anger at national humiliation abroad combined with economic, social and political causes at home to render revolution in some form certain within a few years. Moreover, the Tsarist terrorism, terrible as it was, had been temporarily beaten by the revolutionary terrorists in a series of successful assassinations from 1901 onwards, culminating in the " executions " of Plehve and the Archduke Sergius in 1904 and 1905. The agitation for constitutional government, but not as yet for the overthrow of Tsardom, took a definite shape, and demands arose, from an important Convention of representatives from all parts of Russia to form a Constitutional Ministry. These demands the Government did not accept, but the promoters of the Convention, which was called together by the heads of the zemstvos, were not arrested.

This was in November, 1904. In January, 1905, large bodies of working men, who certainly could not be called violent revolutionists, but were rather men who hoped to gain social advantage through direct appeal to the Tsar as the father of Russia, went out on strike. The strikers, under the leadership of the priest, Father Gapon, issued a proclamation containing a programme which, though moderate from the Socialist standpoint, was distinctly revolutionary of all conditions then existing in Russia. To advocate general freedom, ministerial responsibility to the people, free State education, abrogation of all indemnity payment on land, an eight-hour day, freedom of combination and right to strike against capitalists, and a minimum wage, with complete representation of the people, was certainly a political and labour programme that spelt the downfall of unlimited autocracy almost as completely as the full Socialist claims formulated later. Yet the bearers of this petition to the

Tsar went forward to the palace of the Emperor himself, singing hymns in his honour and exhibiting loyalty of the most effusive kind to his person. Those who distrusted Father Gapon, and regarded him merely as an agent of the reactionary Tsarist coterie, did not know what to make of it. Could it be possible that the Tsar, a mild, easily influenced personage, had decided to abandon his bigoted advisers and take the sting out of revolution, by accepting constitutional demands and the limitation alike of autocratic and capitalist power?

The answer came as soon as the vast deputation arrived in front of the Winter Palace. A fusillade was opened upon the unarmed multitude by bodies of soldiers who had previously been concealed. Hundreds of the deputationists were killed and thousands wounded. This massacre, since known as "Bloody Sunday," is now regarded as the beginning of the first and unsuccessful Russian Revolution. From one end of Russia strikes were begun, meetings were called, and all classes, regardless of economic and social differences, set to work to organise to put an end to a government which resorted to such monstrous methods of repression. Industrial wage-earners and peasants were for once agreed.

This was indeed the commencement of the political revolution. The first Duma, or Constituent Assembly, elected by the whole country did really represent the full amount of development to which Russia, with her 165,000,000 of peasants, the vast majority of whom were uneducated, had yet attained. It was not, of course, a Socialist Assembly, though Social Democrats and agrarian Socialists were well represented. But the majority of its members were opposed to any continuance of the arbitrary powers of the Tsar, and there was good reason to hope that, if all advanced parties made common cause to this end, a new political era would dawn for the nation in which the great social problems of the land and the city industries might be peacefully worked out.

This was the view of George Plechanoff, the brilliant founder and leader of the Marxist Social-Democratic Party. But it was not the opinion of Lenin (or Ulianoff), the head of another section of the same party. Lenin, though a fanatical Marxist himself, and at this time a great admirer and friend of Plechanoff, was bitterly opposed to any arrangement whatever with the educated

classes and the bourgeoisie. This, according to him, would take all the fighting class spirit out of the real revolutionary force, the propertyless proletariat, who, though a small minority of the population, contained within themselves all the real knowledge and power necessary for a class-conscious revolution. The bourgeoisie were, in their nature, oppressors of the workers, the peasants were inevitably a great reactionary element, owing to their economic position, their lack of education and the restriction of their aspirations to the acquisition of land for themselves. Consequently, though it might not be possible for Russia to avoid passing through the capitalist stage of evolution, it was injurious to the whole revolutionary movement to begin by co-operating with their most direct enemies, who would eventually prove more dangerous to the cause than even Tsardom itself.

Plechanoff argued, on the contrary, that the first thing to be done was to rid Russia, as a nation, of despotic rule, and that those who were ready to strive honestly with the mass of the people for that purpose, whether they belonged to the bourgeoisie or the peasantry, were useful, and indeed indispensable, allies for all who were endeavouring to reach the same political goal. But, throughout this period, Lenin took up the extreme dogmatic, doctrinaire standpoint that all compromise was harmful and treacherous to their great ideal. This, in an empire such as Russia, was to play directly into the hands of reaction, and that was precisely the effect of Lenin's policy at that juncture. It brought him into very strange company; for his most intimate friend and associate, in his assaults upon the Duma and the Plechanoff section of Social Democrats, was Malinovsky, afterwards proved to be a police spy and *agent provocateur* in the pay of the Government; although Lenin's confidence, or pretended confidence, in this person was such that he not only supported him as a champion of his theories in the Duma, but went so far as to nominate him, later, as one of the delegates for Russia on the International Socialist Bureau. Before he could come up for election to that body, Malinovsky's real character was discovered and exposed.

There can be no doubt that Lenin's tactics at this period did immense harm to the general cause, and helped the Tsar's Government to recover the reactionary dominance which had

nearly slipped from their grasp. That Lenin knew Malinovsky was a Tsarist agent seems scarcely open to question. But it may well be that Lenin believed himself to be using Malinovsky against both Tsarism and Parliamentarism, while Malinovsky, the clever spy, undoubtedly was using him.

The whole matter is referred to here, because at this point of Lenin's opposition—with the help of Trotsky, Zinovieff and others who afterwards co-operated with him in more serious circumstances—to Parliamentarism generally and Plechanoff's policy in particular, the real foundations of irreconcilable antagonism to all forms of co-operation with other parties, and the fanatical determination to seize power by a minority, were laid. The terms Bolshevik (majority) and Menshevik (minority) in the Marxist Social-Democratic Party soon ceased to have any real significance in that sense, for the two sections changed places in regard to their relative numbers more than once. But " Bolshevik " came to mean that body of Russian Social Democrats who, regardless of all other considerations, were prepared at any moment to use all means to push extreme revolutionary methods to the front. In the first Russian Revolution, with its apparently successful establishment of the popularly elected Duma, they had no chance of grasping power for themselves. All they could do was to shake the belief of those whom they could influence, in any political electoral body whatever, and to widen the existing breach between the wage-earners of the towns and the peasantry. This the Bolsheviks then did so far as they could.

With the election of the first Duma, and the nominal acceptance by the Tsar of Constitutional Government, there was a general belief, not only in Russia itself but throughout Western Europe, that the Empire of the Tsar had entered upon a course of peaceful transformation which would be beneficial to the Russian people and the world at large. There could scarcely have been a greater delusion. It is not too much to say that, from the very commencement of Parliamentary discussions in the Duma, and the formation of a responsible Ministry, reaction began to gain ground. With the army still at his disposal, with the corrupt official class favourable to the autocracy which gave them power to enrich themselves, with the powerful police organisation ready to act in accordance with the orders they

were accustomed to receive from above, and with the Church entirely opposed to anything approaching to reasonable democracy, the Tsar proved to be stronger for evil, after the creation of the Duma, than he had been before. Moved thereto by his reactionary counsellors, he was able to refuse to recognise its authority.

This was not due to any weakness, or lack of initiative, on the part of the Duma and its members. They issued a programme which embodied in moderate language all the political and personal freedom for which they had been agitating in the constituencies, and demanded at the same time the surrender of the land to the peasants and the passage of measures of social legislation to protect the workers of the towns. This democratic and semi-Socialist policy was accepted by the Duma almost unanimously. The Tsar, emboldened by the now rallied and still unbroken forces of reaction, summarised above, and by the evidence of dissension, however small in amount, on the popular side, dissolved the first Duma, and from that time onwards until 1910 and 1911 the old forms of reaction were in full swing. Though the second, third and fourth Dumas were summoned, and thus constitutional forms, to which the Tsar had pledged himself, were not wholly discarded, moderate reformers as well as Socialists were imprisoned, driven into exile or executed, Jews were persecuted and terrorised as before, and, to all appearance, the fine uprising following upon Bloody Sunday had been successfully crushed down.

Rarely had the natural tendencies of autocracy exhibited themselves in more detestable shape, and this at a time when the word "revolution" was on everyone's lips, discouraged as reformers of every shade of opinion had been at the failure of their great effort. Ripe, too, as economic and social conditions were for complete change, especially in regard to political institutions, general liberties and the land, the education and organisation of the mass of the people were so defective that Tsardom, controlling the only existing administrative forces, and filled with the religious conception of the divine right of the monarch to dominate the country, had an enormous advantage. The bourgeoisie, unlike the Tiers Etat of the French Revolution, had little experience or training in great affairs. Though, therefore, the leaders of the people did their best,

ignorance, apathy, lack of cohesion and the habit of obedience rendered their followers incapable of grasping the opportunity prepared for them by economic conditions, and rendered more obvious by the incapacity of the men at the head of the State to estimate the probabilities of the immediate future. Hence, during the years immediately succeeding the dissolution of the first Duma, it looked as if Russia were doomed to another long period of furious repression.

There was, indeed, a superficial similarity in these years with those which preceded the outbreak of the French Revolution. A weak, humane and possibly well-meaning monarch, cursed with a German instead of an Austrian consort. That consort wholly incapable of understanding or appreciating the people over whom she came to rule, and under the domination of priests, charlatans and traitors, who played upon her feelings for the country of her birth. This above. Below, a mass of toiling, ill-nourished semi-serfs. Around the Court a body of self-seeking and corrupt officials and nobility, who cared for no interest but their own. The resemblance to the position in France before 1789 was nevertheless only partial, and the difference already noted between the numbers and organisation of the French educated men of business and professional class, and the extent and experience of the Russians of the same class, alone rendered any comparison illusory. It is nevertheless true that, had Nicholas II. thrown off the influence of his half-insane Tsaritsa and his bigoted men of God, and taken the advice of statesmen and members of his own family, who foresaw the course of events, he might, as Louis XVI. could have done when Turgot and Malesherbes were in power, have quite possibly helped forward a peaceful and beneficial revolution. But the Tsar Nicholas had no high faculties of any kind.

Instead of coming forward as the leader and father of his people, he persisted in the policy of repression, even when the revival of the insurrectionary spirit, temporarily damped down, manifested itself afresh, from 1910 onwards, by political strikes of a threatening character and obviously revolutionary demonstrations all over Russia. Russia was, in fact, in a perpetual ferment, from the students and wage-earners of the towns to the peasantry, which the Government was quite unable to put down. More than one First of May Demonstration was a definite

menace to the reactionary Tsardom, which imagined that the power to check progress was still at its command. The entire educated class sympathised with this renewal of the revolutionary movement suppressed a few years before. It was when this fresh movement was gaining ground, and all hoped that free Russia would ere long assert herself, in spite of attempts to keep her down, that the Great War began.

At first differences were sunk in a common national effort to defeat the common enemy; though even then the extreme Bolshevist section declaimed against any war, even for national defence, which might interfere with the class war at home. Not, however, until the earlier successes had been forgotten in a series of defeats, and the intrigues of the Tsaritsa with her friends, Stürmer and Protopopoff, supported by Rasputin, to surrender corruptly to Germany were generally known, did the people display any disposition to bring about a revolution so long as hostilities lasted. The manifest treachery of M. Stürmer, scathingly exposed by M. Mihliukoff in the Duma, and the obscene and pernicious influence exerted by Rasputin over the Empress becoming well known, there was a general preparation for an upheaval. But even the private execution of Rasputin did not awaken the Tsar's Ministers to the dangers ahead. M. Stürmer, though ejected from the Ministry, was appointed to an important position in the Foreign Office, and the pro-German intrigues went on as before. The reactionists refused to pay attention to anything but their own sinister policy of surrender to the enemy, and thought of nothing less than granting liberties to the Russian people.

In all this Nicholas II. supported his Ministers. Far from feeling their own lot in jeopardy, these same Ministers, when the army was seething with disaffection and disgust at the manner in which Russia's tremendous exertions and wholesale sacrifices had been frittered away by treacherous generals, such as Sukhominoff, worse administrators, and shameless corruption in every department, actually thought it good policy to foment a rising in the capital. They did this confident that its speedy suppression would confirm them in the exercise of supreme power, thus enabling them to make the immediate peace with Germany for which they had so long been plotting. But the scheme was mismanaged by MM. Protopopoff and Stürmer's own adherents,

the troops and even the *corps d'élite* of the guards sided with the people; so that the Tsar and his Government found themselves, quite unexpectedly, face to face with a successful revolution that they themselves had provoked. The downfall of the Romanoff dynasty was decreed.

The amount of bloodshed, especially when compared with the result achieved, was very small in the capital; but in the country districts, so soon as the news of what had occurred in Petrograd spread into the provinces, the peasants carried out wholesale attacks upon the landowners in many districts, of which a full account has never reached Western Europe. But all this is a matter of general history. What is not so well understood is that, at the time of the Revolution of 17th March 1917, Russia was already desperately impoverished by the war, the army was in a condition of complete disintegration and indiscipline, the feeling among the workers in favour of peace at any price with Germany was growing, and nothing short of the revival of a great spirit of national energy and self-sacrifice could save the country from drifting into disruption and anarchy. The economic condition, bad before, had grown worse each day; for there is now no doubt that the reactionists had deliberately encouraged maladministration on the railways and in other departments, with the idea that a breakdown of transport and a consequent shortage of supplies would help them and baffle the revolutionists.

The terrible difficulties which this state of things entailed for those who might endeavour to bring order out of this chaos were not at first recognised. In Western Europe, the successful revolution was welcomed by all parties as the opening of a new and glorious period of free development for a great Empire crushed for centuries under a harmful despotism. But it was soon apparent that the revolutionary leaders had undertaken no light task. The disaffection in the army alone, consisting almost entirely of peasants, many of whom were anxious to get back to their own villages, in order to get their share of the land in the first days of seizure and redistribution, was sufficient to tax the abilities of the ablest statesmen to the utmost, while the problem of dealing with the officials of the old regime, who still constituted the only general administrative force of the country, was by no means easy to solve. A hundred and eighty millions of people,

nearly all in the seventeenth-century period of economic and social development, gauged by Western standards, and the great majority illiterate, could not be dealt with in accordance with Socialist principles barely applicable to an industrial society of the twentieth century.

Therefore it would not be reasonable to criticise harshly the Provisional Government, and more particularly Kerensky and his associates, because they failed to dominate an almost unmanageable situation. To re-establish military discipline in a disaffected army, and at the same time to give the whole of the soldiery the benefit of the latest principles of democracy, was an impossible task. Kerensky himself saw that he was undertaking a forlorn hope, when he accepted the leadership that was forced upon him by the consensus of public opinion. His signing of the Manifesto granting complete democratic rights to the rank and file of the army, at the same time that he proclaimed his intention to enforce an iron discipline, has been vigorously denounced as extreme weakness. But he had, as leader of the peasant Social Revolutionaries and Radical Socialists, declared for war at the start, and unless he had decided to act as dictator it is hard to see what he could have done in view of the universal democratic flood that was sweeping everything before it at this juncture.

Plechanoff, Alexinsky Aksentieff, and other Social Democrats had been at one with Kerensky and his friends in advocating the defence of Russia against Germany, and their Manifesto to this effect was one of the most important political documents published at this critical time. Yet, at the beginning, the Social Democrats had abstained from voting the War Credits. They were likewise ready to support the Provisional Government in all democratic, agrarian and Socialist measures, until the Constituent Assembly of all Russia should meet to establish a definite Government and to formulate a clear policy. In short, a revolution had been brought about, but those who were mainly responsible for its success had not thought out a clear policy for the intervening period between the downfall of the old system and the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. Moreover, a dispute between Kerensky and General Korniloff added to the troubles of the Provisional Government and weakened its position seriously. This weakness was further

intensified by the failure of the Allies to declare in favour of any Government accepted by the Constituent Assembly.

But all these preliminary events fade into insignificance, and are indeed of little moment at the present time, in comparison with what followed.

The Bolsheviks, as already observed, had declared from the first against any participation on the part of Russia in the war against Germany. They had done their utmost, throughout the war, to breathe disaffection with the whole policy of resistance to German aggression into both soldiers and civilians. They carried on secret propaganda in this sense whenever and wherever they could. That, by so doing, they strengthened the traitors in the Russian General Staff and in the Ministry, and played the game of Germany against Russia and the Allies, is indisputable. They considered that it would be better for their party, for Socialism, for Russia and for the world at large, that the German armies should win than that Tsardom should be fortified by victory. This, at any rate, was perfectly clear and logical. It was not the view of the majority of the Marxist Social-Democratic Party, nor of the Social-Revolutionary Party of the peasants, nor of the general body of democratic Russians.

But those who are inclined to stigmatise the conduct of the Bolsheviks on this head as necessarily a betrayal of their country may be reminded that at the beginning of the Franco-German War of 1870-1871 there were not a few eminent Frenchmen, whose patriotism has never been questioned, who, while ready to defend France, nevertheless entertained the hope that Napoleon III. might not win. To the Bolshevik leaders it was more important to overthrow the Tsar and his system than to defeat Germany. The temporary conquest by Germany of Russia might, they argued, be a blessing in disguise. Nor should it be forgotten that the Tsar's ministers, for very different reasons from those which affected the Bolsheviks, were quite ready, nay eager, to make a separate peace with Germany on terms which amounted almost to unconditional surrender. Extremes met. The Revolution of 1917 at least delayed the peace of reaction, and gave the Allies time to prepare for the peace of Bolshevism and pro-Germanism. Thus the Bolshevik policy, as formulated on this head by Lenin and his comrades, was undoubtedly pro-German; but pro-German because, as they thought, German

success might serve the cause of Marxism applied to Russia in its most doctrinaire, premature and impossibilist shape.

When, however, in the midst of the desperately difficult circumstances arising out of the Revolution, which had brought about that very downfall of autocracy for which the Bolsheviks themselves proclaimed that they were striving in their own Machiavellian anti-national way—when, at this the most critical moment, perhaps, in all the long history of Russia, Lenin and his companions were hurried from Switzerland to Russia, through Germany, in German carriages, provided with German money and in constant communication with the German Headquarters Staff, it still seems astounding that they were not arrested at the frontier and sent back whence they came. However honest they might be in their political and social convictions, it was well known, to the men temporarily in control of the Russian Government, that the Bolshevik leaders were utterly unscrupulous, and that they would stick at nothing, first, to arrange an immediate peace of surrender with Germany, and then to ensure their own accession to power. Nevertheless, they were given free entrance, and were allowed full rights of agitation, propaganda and combination. Even when their methods were proved to be entirely anarchical and subversive, and they were consequently arrested and imprisoned, they were promptly released to carry on their work.

As might have been expected, these weak and hesitating tactics gave the Bolsheviks, ere long, the opportunity they looked for: the people having been convinced meanwhile that the Provisional Government was afraid of its not numerous but determined and fanatical opponents. Thus it came about that, at Petrograd itself, the Bolsheviks were able to carry out a successful *coup d'état*, before the Constituent Assembly, where the Social Revolutionaries and the Marxist Mensheviks had a great majority, could set to work. This Constituent Assembly, elected by full popular suffrage, at first had the support of the Bolsheviks. But when they discovered that they were in a hopeless minority in the Assembly, and that the representatives of the peasants with their friends would be in complete control, they dissolved the "Constituent" by armed force. Armed force was also used to secure Bolshevik domination in several provincial cities; and in more than one instance peaceful political

gatherings of elected and unarmed deputies were dispersed by volleys from machine guns and rifles. Throughout these beginnings of the Red Terror, the Allies stood entirely aside, refusing either to acknowledge the Constituent Assembly, or to help its supporters to help themselves.

At this time, when it was admitted by Lenin himself that the Bolsheviks had no greater following than 200,000 in the whole 180,000,000 people of then undivided Russia, this infinitesimal minority, having captured the machine of Government, declared the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat"; though the Russian proletariat itself did not comprise more than at the outside ten per cent. of the population. Of that ten per cent. the Bolsheviks were one per cent. The Soviets, or local popular bodies representative of the interests of the mass of the voters, were not, as is sometimes assumed, the invention of the Bolsheviks at all, but were set on foot, in some cases before, and generally immediately after, the Revolution. The Bolsheviks have taken care to prevent, for the time being, any difficulty arising with these democratic bodies by appointing commissaries with dictatorial powers in each district. The same course, in a different form, has been pursued with the Co-operative Associations. These most useful distributive agencies, which had made great way among the people during the whole of the troublous period through which Russia had been passing, were placed under the direct control of the Bolshevist State. In fact, though the methods adopted by the Bolsheviks to get and maintain themselves in power were thoroughly anarchist, their administration was autocratic, cruel and butcherly to the last degree.

Of this little account is taken in politics. Atrocities committed by the successful, no matter how atrocious, are soon forgotten and forgiven by the mildest of humanitarians who have political, or commercial, advantages to gain by cultivating shortness of memory in such matters. That the Bolsheviks gained their position and keep it by terrorism of the most ruthless kind, that they resorted to massacre and torture of their assumed domestic enemies, is quite beyond dispute. Their recent official instructions to extirpate the Cossack peasantry in the most thorough fashion is but another extension of their systematic scheme of immolation, not only of the bourgeoisie, but of democrats and Socialists who differ from the policy of

Lenin, Trotsky, Zinovieff, Litvinoff and the rest. But, if they finally win, all this will be overlooked.

It is most unfortunate, however, that the Allied Governments, and the British Government in particular, after having declared that they would not interfere in the internal affairs of Russia, when the surrender to Germany at Brest-Litovsk had been consummated, should have enabled the Bolsheviks to pose as the defenders of their country against invasion by the troops of foreign nations. Their success against the Allied forces, as well as their victories over Russian armies, largely financed and munitioned by the Allies, strengthened their position enormously: the rather that the territories at first overrun by these domestic foes of the Bolsheviks were treated by the reactionaries in the wake of Generals Denikin, Yudenitch and Admiral Koltchak as if they had been returned to Tsarist rule.

Thus, within a few months, the small Bolshevik minority gripped control of Russian centralised authority, and, within two years and a half, had defeated their enemies in the field, and become almost undisputed masters of Russia. At any other time such a remarkable success would have been impossible. But ruinous war, a rapid revolution—not carried through by the Bolsheviks, be it observed—the breakdown of military discipline, the general impoverishment of the country, the strange weakness of the Provisional Government, and the fanatical determination of this extreme Marxist section, opposed to doubt and indecision on the part of the supporters of the "Constituent," gave victory, for the time being, to those who knew their own minds and had no scruples, against those who hesitated and were afflicted with moral sense.

The first intention of Lenin, Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders was to seize control, apply the principles of scientific Socialism to Russia, overawe the peasantry and their (to Lenin and Company) reactionary views about private ownership, skip several steps in the slow advance of social evolution, and thus impose their doctrinaire opinions, not only upon the Russian people but upon the workers of all the nations. It seems beyond question, from Lenin's own utterances, that he believed, for example, whatever sort of peace was arranged with Germany made little or no difference, since the success of the Social Revolution in Russia upon the lines laid down would involve

Germany, and thereafter the whole of Europe, in a similar revolution. It was above all to be a proletarian revolution, though the proletaires of Russia were few indeed compared to the peasantry, who were the chief obstacle to communistic reorganisation. The bourgeoisie and the intellectuals were to be destroyed, or reduced to impotence, since the workers would speedily be trained to perform all useful functions in the Communist Commonwealth.

This, of course, was not Marxism according to Marx, or, indeed, scientific Socialism in any sense, as all the ablest Marxists in the world, beginning with Plechanoff on the spot, at once pointed out. Permanent social revolution and communist reconstruction can only be successfully achieved when the bulk of the population in any given country understands, and is ready to accept, the new forms which have, consciously or unconsciously, developed in the old society. The marvellous transition effected by Japan in forty years from feudalism to capitalism, and the simultaneous growth of Socialism in that remarkable nation, have altered the opinion of most Marxists as to the rapidity with which, under favourable circumstances, great social modifications may be brought about. But the process of historic evolution, slow or fast, cannot be overleapt by the most relentless fanatic, least of all in an empire such as that of Russia.

Lenin was of this opinion, at the time when he was an active member of the combined Social-Democratic Party. Experience has, apparently, forced him to return to the same view. For Bolshevism in control has been unable to avoid resorting to capitalist organisation under the State in its most arbitrary shape ; the idea that nationalisation of land—the most difficult problem of all—could be realised in a hurry, against the demand of many millions of peasants for private possession of their holdings, has been abandoned ; the masters of Russia are eager to develop international trade and commerce on profiteering lines ; and they have actually bargained for the payment of interest on old foreign loans, a project which, if actually carried out, must spell ruin to Russian agriculture. The Russian Communist Revolution, which was, and is still, according to its leaders, to result in universal upheaval, has been itself driven back upon the old economic and social methods, which can

only be beneficially replaced by a sane development of Social Democracy, such as can be observed in Czecho-Slovakia and Sweden, and can most easily and peaceably attain its ultimate goal in Great Britain.

There has been a natural disposition, as already said, to compare the Russian Revolution, both before and after the Bolshevik coup at the end of 1917, to the great French Revolution; and a superficial resemblance is indisputable. But the differences are also very great. The most striking of all, perhaps, is the contrast between the characters and careers of the Russian and the French exiles. The latter consisted almost entirely of the old feudal nobility, whose greed, cruelty, incapacity and moral cowardice—"*Nous étions des lâches*," said one of them—had been largely responsible for the catastrophe. They were the men and women who gathered at Coblenz to help the invasion of France by German and Austrian armies, rejoicing in the hope of their victory over Frenchmen, and bewailing their defeats when the Republican forces were successful.

Russian exiles, on the contrary, are chiefly the men and women who, having spent the best years of their life in fighting Tsardom and stirring up the people to resist intolerable oppression, were at last able, at the price of long imprisonment, and sufferings, to realise the splendid triumph of 17th March 1917. They are noble patriots, whom Bolshevik despotism has in its turn banished. But, maltreated and lucky to escape with their lives, so far from welcoming the attack of the Allied troops upon Russia, they nearly all of them protested against this foreign intervention which, if successful, would have personally benefited them. The Bolsheviks have persecuted and frequently killed those heroes and heroines but for whose great services they never could have feloniously laid hands upon the Russian Republic. These victims of minority despotism still believe that the democracy of Russia will assert itself and realise their dreams of social emancipation from all forms of tyranny for their countrymen. One thing they did achieve, in spite of all that has occurred since: they rendered the return of the Romanoffs and the system they represented impossible.

As has been well said by a Russian Socialist,[1] Russia has produced men of great genius and profound thinkers who have had

[1] Landau-Aldanov.

much influence on the world at large; but none of them has affected the West so seriously as Lenin, who is perhaps not even a man of high intelligence. It is extremely difficult to understand how a vast population came to be dominated by a small and truculent minority of middle-class men, who utterly failed to carry out the programme of social reconstruction they meant to impose upon their countrymen, and who, to commence with, had no great reputation among the people. Only when we reflect upon the results of ages of similar tyranny by a minority in power, the absence of any large intelligent and administrative bourgeoisie, and upon the lack of cohesion among the vast masses of illiterate peasants—only then do we begin to comprehend how the whole astounding phenomenon has been brought about.

But the character of the Bolshevist dictator, Lenin, who has played the part of a Communist Ivan the Terrible in the new pseudo-Marxist Tsardom, counted for much. It seems to be the general opinion of Russians who knew him well that Lenin has no great intellectual gifts, and that he attained to his dominant position by pure accident. Yet, being neither an orator, a powerful writer, a great organiser, nor a statesman, he secured pre-eminence over capable and jealous rivals, placed himself in absolute authority over a hundred millions of people, and gave an impetus to proletarian revolt throughout the civilised world. That is no small achievement. Granted that circumstances favoured him at home, and that the great and growing hatred of profiteering capitalism aided his influence abroad, there is more here by a great deal than merely an obstinate and ruthless mediocrity. If the times produced Lenin, Lenin has influenced his times. The day has gone by when Carlyle's idea of the great man, taking hold of events and twisting them to accord with his magnificent far-seeing policy, can be accepted. The vast movements of world-wide civilisation develop themselves under conditions which take much less account of the greatest individuals. But the individual here and there does count in human affairs, nevertheless, and it seems worth while to attempt to analyse the psychology of the Bolshevik dictator.

First and foremost, Lenin is quite unhuman and unethical in all his actions. Having made up his mind that, as his fellow-

Russian, Bakunin, taught, existing society ought to be destroyed for the sake of humanity, the lives and sufferings of men and women do not count at all in his Juggernaut advance to the desired end of general destruction. The bourgeoisie must be physically as well as intellectually crushed, and all who support them must be put out of the way. This not only in Russia, where the members of the detested class were not numerous, but all over the world. The drones must be immolated with entomological completeness. Hence the Bakunist ethic: "Whatever helps to this end is moral: all that obstructs it is immoral." And of the morality or immorality of any action, individual or collective, Lenin is the sole judge. He stands outside the present social system altogether. But this view of life, once accepted and carried out to its logical conclusion, gives the person imbued with it immense power. Facts may change his immediate course, but not his ultimate intention.

Next, Lenin has the most superb confidence in himself. He goes to work to set things right in accordance with certain misconceived theories. They go wrong, as it was inevitable they should. He is still the one man to put them right! That this necessitates the entire abandonment of his previous policy does not affect him in the least. There he is, and there he will remain, until such time as, having by other methods brought enough of mankind round to his opinion—a minority will serve him in the future as in the past—he will go on with his original programme quite regardless of outside opinion. Thus he consorts with police spies whom he knows to be police spies, and uses them, or is convinced he does use them. He becomes an agent of the German Government, and uses it, or is convinced he uses it. He employs the worst of the agents of the old Black Hundreds, and uses them to make away with his enemies. He accepts money where he can get it, when weak: he lays hands upon it, or prints it, when strong. Always the end justifies the means. But the end is a long time in coming, and the means have to be varied.

Then, Lenin is pecuniarily honest. He is neither luxurious, extravagant nor miserly. His fanaticism calls for money. Money must be had. But he lives penuriously himself, and has a contempt for those who do not. This, too, is no sham parsimony, no posing asceticism. It is part of the man who, in

his strange way, has got bigger as his outlook became wider. Millions of money, like millions of men, are for him mere counters in the huge game he is playing for a stake that, unless all history and all economics are to be read backwards, he never can win. It is an astonishing personality and an amazing career.

Lastly, as I read his influence, Lenin possesses, like the scoundrel Rasputin—to whom I do not for a moment compare him—some inscrutable hypnotic power, which enables him to exercise his will both upon men of higher capacity and greater acquirements than himself, and upon artisans and peasants who are, in these respects, much his inferiors. Individuals and audiences are similarly affected, though they may be unable to recall much, if anything, of what he said. This power of influencing others has been attributed to the fact that Lenin is always playing upon the almost inexhaustible gamut of human hatreds. But that seems an insufficient explanation. Nor will terror or bribery give the clue to some of his personal conquests.

There are two aspects of Bolshevism which are well worth serious consideration from the point of view of the evolution of social revolution in the modern world. The first must present this effort of a handful—for 200,000 is not even a large handful as compared with 180,000,000—of furious fanatics to endeavour to impose an altogether premature social system upon a vast empire as wholly harmful, foredoomed to failure and certain in the long run to help reaction. Such action is, in fact, quite in opposition to the theories of historic and economic development upon which the Bolshevik leaders claimed to proceed. The tyranny of a minority has never been accepted by educated and organised Social Democrats in any part of Europe as calculated to aid the development of the Co-operative Commonwealth or the establishment of a democratic Socialist Republic.

The crushing down of representative democratic political institutions (such as the Constituent Assembly) by force of arms has always been regarded by Socialists as injurious to genuine social progress, and likely to throw back the great conscious working-class movement for emancipation from slavery in all forms. That this untimely attempt in Russia, accompanied by the most fearful injustice and monstrous cruelty, has done much to hinder orderly transformation in other countries is already manifest. Had it not been for the fact that Social Democracy,

in its true scientific shape, had already made immense progress outside Russia, the mischief done would have been far greater. In Russia itself only by a miracle can the Bolshevik despotism, which has intensified the economic chaos already existing, be productive of good. Agricultural countries as a rule revive rapidly from external or internal disturbance, though this rule was broken by the long drawn-out horrors of the Thirty Years' War and the ruinous devastations of the Ottoman Turks in Asia and Europe. Yet unless the economic ineptitude of Bolshevism brings about its own speedy overthrow, more than a generation may elapse before Russia recovers from the pretended "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" imposed by a group of middle-class autocrats.

The second aspect of Bolshevism is that which has regard to its influence upon Europe and civilised countries generally. It cannot be disputed that the apparent success of the Bolshevik leaders, in grasping uncontrolled authority by main force, has encouraged many ignorant, ambitious or fanatical persons to imagine that a *coup d'état* of the Bolshevik-Napoleonic description might enable them "to make twelve o'clock at eleven," regardless of the real stage of economic development or the opinions of the majority of the population whom they desired to organise in a Socialist sense, and thus put them in the position of Lenin and Trotsky, in England, France, Germany or even the United States. This was clearly mischievous. So also was the sympathy and even pecuniary help given by the Bolshevik Government, so far as possible, to those who shared, or were thought to share, their views upon an immediate and simultaneous social revolution by violence in all civilised countries. This policy favoured direct action and was opposed to political and Parliamentary action, even where the people had the most complete voting power at their command, and could obtain control over the National Assembly in their respective nations. In short, it strengthened mere emotional upheaval against economic, reasoned and thoroughly organised social revolt. Thousands will not believe that Bolshevik dictatorship now means for the town workers strict industrial conscription, twelve hours' work a day, for seven days in the week, under pain of death; that wholesale anarchy exists in the rural districts and in general transport; that there is no right of free speech, no free Press;

and that there is no possibility of trade union combination resisting the fiats of the Bolshevik masters. Many thousands of wage-earners in Western Europe still credit none of these undoubted truths, though they have been published time after time in official Bolshevik manifestos and Bolshevik newspapers, the latter being the only journals allowed to exist.

Yet the Bolshevist control of Russia has taught the toilers of other countries what to avoid and what to strive for. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, as given expression to by an insignificant minority of middle-class doctrinaires amid a backward population, has proved inevitably unsuccessful and ruinous. Where, however, economic conditions are ripe for the transformation of a capitalist profiteering society into a Co-operative Commonwealth, in which the entire community joins in giving social service for the general production and distribution of wealth for the common use, there the greatest revolution of all time may peacefully solve the problem of class antagonism, to the infinite advantage of the whole people.

## Note 1

I have purposely refrained, in the text, from enlarging upon the methods of the Bolshevik Government in asserting its authority. But the following official decree gives a fair idea of its treatment of those peasants who, for any cause, resisted the dictatorship of a ridiculous minority of the population. The Cossack peasantry, it may be observed, have been settled on the land they cultivate for very many centuries :—

Late events on different fronts of the Cossack regions, our advance into the depths of the Cossack settlements, and the increasing resistance of the Cossack troops oblige us to give the workers of our Party indications as to the character of their work in building up and consolidating the Soviet power in the above regions.

Taking into consideration the experience of a year's civil war with the Cossacks, it is necessary to acknowledge as the only way the most ruthless struggle with the whole of the well-to-do Cossack people by means of their wholesale extermination.

Compromises and half-and-half measures are inadmissible, and therefore it is necessary—

(1) To institute a mass terror against the well-to-do Cossacks *and peasants*, exterminating them wholesale, and to institute a ruthless mass terror against those Cossacks in general who have any direct or indirect part in the struggle against the Soviet power.

(2) To confiscate their corn and force them to bring all spare stores to certain fixed points. This refers to corn and to all other agricultural produce.

(3) To take all measures for aiding poor immigrants, organising their immigration where possible.

(4) To put the immigrants on a footing with the Cossacks in the agrarian and in all other respects.

(5) To institute a general disarmament, shooting everyone who may be found in possession of arms after the date appointed for disarmament.

(6) To issue arms to reliable men only.

(7) To keep armed detachments in all Cossack settlements until complete order is established.

(8) All commissaries appointed to the several settlements are invited to exhibit a maximum degree of firmness and unwaveringly to fulfil the above instructions.

The Central Committee has passed a resolution for passing through the corresponding Soviet institutions an order to the Narcomzen (People's Commissary for Agriculture) to elaborate with speed regulations for the mass transfer of the poor to the lands of the Cossacks.

The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.

Chief of the Chancellery of the Political Section of the Southern Front.

(*Signed*) CHERNIAK,

*Secretary of the Political Section of the 8th Army.*

## Note 2

The best books on Bolshevism have been published in the United States. They are *Bolshevism* and *The Greatest Failure in All History*, both by John Spargo (Harper Brothers, New York), also *Sovietism*, by English Walling, containing a very full collection of official Bolshevik documents. The case for the Bolshevik Dictatorship has been stated in England by Eden and Cedar Paul, *Creative Revolution: a Study in Communist Ergatocrasy* (Allen & Unwin, London), and in R. W. Postgate's *The Bolshevik Theory* (Grant Richards Ltd., London).

# CONCLUSION

THE foregoing survey of the development of man in society, and the social revolutions which have accompanied and been a part of his growth, shows, brief and imperfect as it is, how little conscious appreciation our ancestors had of their own surroundings, or of the course of events which led them from one stage of social conditions to another. They drifted on the tide of human evolution from they cared not whence to they knew not whither. Only now, at last, at the beginning of the twentieth century of our era, which has itself witnessed the most tremendous war of all the ages, do we see dimly what went before, and are able to understand in part what shall come after.

From the primitive and rude, and then the more refined, communism of ages past, which endured for hundreds of thousands or millions of years, mankind passed through long, long periods of tribulation and sorrow. Chattel slavery, serfdom, wage slavery each in turn had their will of the many, who have been at the mercy, which has ever meant the cruelty, of the few. Much of brutality, much of bestiality, much of horror clung around the early days of our communal forbears. But, compared with the evils that grew out of nearly all forms of private property—the individual ownership of man by man, and the creation of wealth for the minority by the toil of the masses—savages certainly fared no worse, and the more advanced communists enjoyed life far, far better than their successors of modern times.

Civilisation has throughout meant, and still means, the degradation and embrutement of vast numbers of the men and women who exist under its social system. In the most highly civilised countries, in the greatest and richest of civilised cities, crowds of people pass their lives in wretchedness and misery, from which the higher barbarians shrink in disgust. So little has humanity as a whole thought of this, so natural and inevitable has the squalor and suffering of millions of human beings seemed to the ablest brains of each successive period of civilised

life, that it has all been taken for granted, and no organised collective effort has yet been made to attain to a less deplorable form of human association. Nor, on looking back over the long records of history, does it appear possible that the intermediate stages of unconscious social evolution could ever have been overleaped. Certainly, the forcible revolts of outraged human nature against intolerable suffering almost invariably failed to secure improved conditions, or, where accidental success was achieved, it meant only that the victors placed the vanquished under the yoke from which they had freed themselves.

We of our day are inheriting the results of the martyrdom of man to the forms of production and exchange, developed by slow gradation from the institutions of private property, and the individual ownership of goods and men and lands by the dominant rich. As described above, all the marvellous discoveries and inventions of the six or seven generations preceding our own, built up on the still more marvellous achievements of earlier times, have passed into the hands of the wealthy, who enjoy, with little or no advantage to the poor, who toil and suffer. With all this morality and religion have nothing to do. Against the relentless weight of the Juggernaut car of capitalist progress ethics are powerless and religion has no say. Such improvement as is attainable comes not from the so-called good side but from the bad side of civilisation. From the proletarians, not from the plutocrats, does the need for change make itself felt. Modern capitalism, barely two hundred years old, is showing itself to be not only injurious to the vast majority of individuals, but a definite obstacle to the advance of the race. Capitalism, also, is itself destroying the competition which, not more than a generation ago, was its economic deity, and is substituting, for this dethroned fetish, combination and monopoly, impelled thereto by those same economic forces which it claims to control.

But this change of method is accompanied by more important changes still. The combinations of the propertyless wage-earners are becoming every day more and more complete and more formidable, owing to the same economic pressure. Only by the suppression of individual selfishness, in the common interest of trade and of class, can even a better scale of wages be secured, against the combined capitalists, for the individual workers themselves. A higher standard of life and more leisure

is the war-cry on the one side, as against greater production and higher profit on the other. The class war in the field of economics and sociology becomes more strenuous each day. But, as a result of this manifest antagonism, the State, even the bourgeois State, steps forward first in peace, then more widely in war, and again more widely still as nations strive against industrial monopoly or industrial anarchy. All can now see that this is inevitable, however vigorously they may strive to postpone its action—in the time of peace restored.

So far the controlling class have nowhere displayed any serious intention to lead in the transformation which precedes the coming period: nowhere, also, have the toilers in one solid class put themselves forward as the capable heirs of capitalism in decay. But, in all the advanced nations the claims of the wage-earners, set forth by their more vigorous and intelligent champions, reach out towards the new social dispensation, when the payment of wages by one class to another class—the last of the slave systems—shall be finally swept away.

The problems of social life which now, manifestly, lie immediately ahead of us, cannot possibly be solved so long as we bemuse our intelligence by bowing down before the fetishism of money, and imagine that to produce articles of exchange for profit is the highest end and aim of man in society. Even to-day the machinery of international exchange is breaking down in its banking form, and elaborate barter is replacing the methods which were thought unchangeable. What co-operation between nations is doing on a small scale to-day, international understandings for the collective transfer of social wealth will accomplish on an infinitely greater scale to-morrow.

In the transition period, when monopolies, trusts and combines are being absorbed and administered by collective agency, in the form of nationalisation, there will almost certainly be, as indeed is already apparent, a struggle between State Bureaucracy, miscalled State Socialism, and Social Democracy, which, in its developed form, is Democratic Co-operation or Communism. The former may involve a continuance of the wage system, and an extension of modified class management; the latter means the entire abolition of the payment of money wages, and the production and distribution of wealth by all, for the use and benefit of all. It is a return to the old democratic primitive

Communism, on an immensely higher plane, due to the almost infinitely greater powers of man over Nature. This difference between State Bureaucrats and Social Democrats was acute even in the days of the Chartists ; it will now have to be settled in the political and social field before any definite system of Socialist organisation is generally accepted.

In the past I thought that only when all, or nearly all, nations and peoples had reached the comprehension of Social Democracy, and the economic development of each had embraced the Co-operative Commonwealth of all, could men attain to that higher communal life and fraternal intercommunication towards which humanity, formerly unconsciously, and now, in part at least, consciously, is tending. This view I hold no longer. On the contrary, I believe it is possible that *one* people, which is in the latest period of developed capitalism, can so transform their national life as to be able to attain alone to that brotherhood of democratic collectivism or Communism which shall not only enable them to suffice for themselves, but, by the social happiness secured for all their citizens, shall also serve to lift others to the same level more rapidly than would otherwise be possible.

It is no mere patriotic regard for my own country, whose terrible misdeeds at home and abroad have often horrified the world, which leads me to the conviction that such a possibility of independent yet ever more closely inter-Socialist development is nearest in Great Britain. This island, although it has fallen behind both the United States and Germany in the struggle of national capitalist competition, is, nevertheless, further advanced than any other country towards the desired reconstruction, and that, too, notwithstanding the lack of education of the people. The reason is that here the working population is wholly divorced from the soil, and destitute of any valuable personal property. Hence there are no real economic antagonisms between the workers in country and town, nor between various grades of wage-earners, when once they understand that only by joint action can they gain complete control of the forces which now dominate them ; and thus acquire collectively, as a free community of fellow-workers for the common good, that general ownership, and personal emancipation from long, compulsory and irksome toil, which individually

they could never obtain. This absence of internal conflict between the British proletarians, which they themselves are learning to take advantage of more definitely every day—as shown by the closer and closer relations that they cultivate—is accompanied by a development of economic forms, and an increase of State interference, leading to the co-ordination of competitive anarchy by co-operative effort. That is no mere hypothesis: the process can be seen going on all round us. It can only be arrested by armed force from within, or armed force from without. And then only for a time. Not even the most terrific force, however ruthlessly applied, can permanently prevent, though it may partially retard, the birth of a new society which has been created in the womb of the old.

When the workers claim, as part of a clear political programme, nationalisation of the railways and transport generally, nationalisation of the mines, nationalisation of land, nationalisation of shipping, nationalisation of this or that necessary of life, as they are demanding all this in England at present, it is obvious that they are striving for a complete social revolution, in which ownership, control and management by the bourgeoisie shall be set aside in favour of the collective ownership, control and management by the whole adult population, all of whom shall contribute their quota to the general social service. It is impossible to stop short of complete socialisation—that is to say, of all the great means and instruments of production and distribution. This in turn must inevitably lead on to the equitable sharing of products among all members of the community. Every step will be in the direction of the Co-operative Commonwealth. Since there is no difficulty whatever in creating wealth far in excess of our requirements, by the scientific organisation and application of the light labour of all to the satisfaction of our social needs, then the old motto, "From each according to ability, to each according to needs," ceases to be Utopian and becomes a national reality.

The problems of society, so far as they relate to daily life and sustenance, will then no longer be affected in any way by money values, but Labour will be devoted to this or that branch of production in proportion to the desires of the community. Work that, after all possible amelioration, remains dangerous or difficult will be shared by all of the community who are fit,

instead of being relegated to a class. The standard of life for each and all will be far higher than anything ever yet attained or suggested. The best possible conditions will be so obviously to the general benefit that the elevation of the level of society will be the aim of each individual as of the whole community.

Education and administration of the highest quality will be required to carry out to the full this establishment of real social order. But, in the preliminary stages, it is quite as easy, nay easier, for the workers to make use of the best brains of the country to serve the community, as it is for the capitalists to command them for their own private gain. The question of pay or remuneration need not arise. New conceptions of the dignity of man and the honour of social service will inevitably take the place of sordid ideas of personal advantage. Besides, if men and women, for their social service, obtain all that they want to maintain themselves in perfect physical and mental health and activity—what more do they want?

But, it may be argued, if we admit that all which it is possible to produce within the limits of our populous island is produced, still there will be necessaries and luxuries that cannot be grown or produced within its limits. Here collective in place of individual exchange at once steps in; and it is certain that a highly organised society could and would produce so vast a surplus for exchange or barter that a higher offer could be made for desirable imports than any non-Socialist country could afford. The waste in all directions, from coal onwards, under our existing system is so great that, apart from infinitely improved methods, the mere cessation of this bootless extravagance would vastly increase national capacity for exchange.

Of the new ethic inevitably arising out of a scientific and enlightened communism it is not necessary to write. Nearly all the crimes of the decalogue are property crimes. Remove the incentive and the crimes will vanish. We may hope that, with the perfection of all social and material conditions, man's almost ineradicable tendency to torment his fellows or himself will at last disappear.

But what of art, of letters, of beauty, of charm of existence at every stage of life? Here a new world indeed will open up before humanity. With the disappearance of overwork and anxiety, infinite possibilities of the development of the higher

faculties will be afforded to the exceptionally endowed, while all will be able to use and enjoy every capacity they possess. "Leisure and pleasure in ample measure" will be at the command of each and all. And leisure where there is no more toil means, not idleness, but an alternation of agreeable exercise of mind and body for personal and communal advantage. Such freedom of the individual, trained from childhood to use its powers in all liberty of action which involves no harm or annoyance to others, with the examples of art ever at hand for encouragement and guidance, will harmonise with the highest efforts towards the realisation of perfection in every department of human endeavour. None being depressed by his calling and surroundings, all will breathe a fresh atmosphere of exhilaration where the ideal fades insensibly into the real.

For such delight in life as we can now foresee to be possibly attainable for all has never yet been experienced, even by the fortunate few. When from infancy and youth to full development and age the beauties of nature and the pleasure of perfect health can be entered upon and enjoyed with none of the sordid and degrading drawbacks due to the dire poverty or extreme riches of our day; when work is but the useful and pleasing expression of zeal for the community and regard for the individual, toil and exhaustion being wholly unknown; when, throughout the longer, fuller and more active life which mankind will then be heirs to, the minds of all will be more completely cultivated than those of the most gifted have ever yet been; when art naturally rises to higher and ever higher pitch of exquisite achievement due to a keener public conception of beauty in sculpture, painting, architecture, decoration than the best of the Greeks themselves could realise; when ethic in all its branches is no stiff formula devised to limit the natural play of human desires and faculties in accordance with a crude, ascetic notion of personal self-sacrifice, but is a well-founded co-ordination of physical, mental and moral pleasure, virtually unrestrained for the whole of human society; when the whole world is fully, freely and rapidly open to the travel and survey of all its inhabitants—when all this is achieved, as achieved it assuredly will be within a calculable period, death itself will be nothing more than a sigh of satisfied content at the close of a charming and well-ordered banquet of life.

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